

THE PRISTINE PURE
ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY OF
ĀDI ŚAṆKARA
(Śaṅkara Siddhānta)

Author

Swāmi Satchidānandendra Saraswati

Translated by

D. B. Gangolli

Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya

Holenarsipur, Hassan Dist.,

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**THE PRISTINE PURE
ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY OF
ĀDI ŚAṆKARA
(Śaṅkara Siddhānta)**

**A treatise which clarifies the Vedāntic
methodology by quoting Śaṅkara's original Bhāshya
sentences as authoritative and in accordance with
Intuitive Logic and Experience.**

**Author
Swāmi Satchidānandendra Saraswati
(Yellambalase Subramanya Sharma
- before initiation into Sannyāsa)**

**Translated by
D. B. Gangolli**

**Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya
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FOREWARD

Although the Vedāntic philosophy which Shri Śaṅkarāchārya has expounded in his Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas depicting the Absolute Reality of the Upanishads and the Vedas, which can never be refuted, in such a clear manner akin to perceiving and comprehending a fruit held in our palm, it is the irony of our times and our misfortune that the post-Śaṅkara commentators as well as the other commentators belonging to alien schools of philosophy have not been able to fathom the depths and subtleties of his profound teachings. To add insult to this injury, so to speak, these worthies have been unwittingly pointing out all sorts of imaginary, fanciful defects in Shri Śaṅkara's philosophy. Because of the reason that for the illogical arguments of the commentators belonging to the rival schools, the *Vyākhyānakāras* (post-Śaṅkara commentators) who profess to be the ardent followers of Ādi Śaṅkara are solely responsible, it becomes expedient and essential at the outset to refute and discard their errant and erroneous commentaries (which are very much in vogue today in Vedāntic literature and parlance).

By this, the readers need not think that it is my opinion that in the post-Śaṅkara commentaries there is nothing whatsoever worthy of knowing or comprehending. There is not an iota of doubt that they have elucidated many a topic taken up for discussion in the original commentaries in an excellent manner, and have strengthened them by means of their own logical devices. In fact, with the help of the *Vyākhyānakāras* alone I have been able to divine the profound meanings of several terse portions of the original Bhāshyas. Hence my sense of gratitude and reverence towards them is not less than that of

anyone else. Even so, with great regret it is to be said that just as the Indian proverb says : ‘The ink devoured the thousand-figured painting’, the modern theory of ‘Mūlāvidyā’, which is very much in vogue everywhere, has literally tainted black, as it were, the excellent and efficient Vedāntic methodology, found in and through the Bhāshyas of Shri Śaṅkara and which is like a highly beautiful picture.

In order to cleanse Vedānta of this dross and dirt, I wrote in Sanskrit a treatise entitled - ‘Mūlāvidyānirāsaḥ’ or ‘Śaṅkara Hṛidayam’ about ten years ago itself. Those ardent students of Sanskrit language who wish to discern the shallowness of this (doctrinaire) theory of Mūlāvidyā as well as the profundity of the Intuitive deliberation on the method of Avasthātraya, which is like a pillar of strength for the basic methodology of Vedānta itself, will have to meticulously study that Sanskrit treatise alone. Here I have presented only the most important points with authoritative sources from the original Bhāshyas in a lucid manner in Kannada. I have every hope that the readers will unfailingly be convinced of the fact that Ādi Śaṅkara had not even an iota of acceptance or approval of this theory of ‘Mūlāvidyā’ by virtue of the numerous Bhāshya statements mentioned here. Here there are many a hint and suggestion as to how one can cognize *Advaita* (non-dualism) directly (Intuitively), without entertaining even a taint of this Mūlāvidyā theory. By reading this small treatise even if a few students are induced by a desire to read the original work and to pursue further this deliberation my purpose is served.

Holenarsipur

1940

Yallambalase Subramanya Sharma

Author

PREFACE

This valuable booklet is a free and fair translation of a Kannada booklet printed recently by the newly-founded 'Śruti Śaṅkara Samskrita Samshōdhana Pratishthāna' which has the prime purport of dissemination of the Knowledge contained in the Vedas and Vedānta as also teaching Sanskrit through their study, research, propagation etc. For this purpose this Institution has undertaken the colossal task of conducting daily classes, *Vedānta Saptāhas* (seven days, programmes of discourses on Vedāntic topics by scholars), tuition in the advanced or higher literature of Sanskrit, practical training in the scriptural rituals and, last but not the least, research in ancient Vedic texts etc. The predominant objectives of the Institution - it need not be gainsaid - are : *Shāstrarakshaṇa* (protection or preservation of our ancient scriptures) and *Shāstrōktajñānārjana* (gathering together or collection of the knowledge taught, expounded in our scriptures).

With regard to this treatise, Paramahansa Shri Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji had in his *Pūrvāshrama* (i.e. as a householder before initiation into Sannyāsa) had published in 1940 a booklet - 'Śaṅkara Siddhānta', which was a product of research, under the auspices of Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya, which was founded by him alone. In the early 60's all the copies of this booklet were sold out and for reasons beyond the control of the Kāryālaya the treatise had not been reprinted till now.

Although this treatise is small in size - as the author himself has concluded - it was not written with any intentions of acquiring money or fame, nor of providing

a vocation for those who undertake the study and practice of Vedānta and of getting any kudos from scholars.

Those ardent students and practitioners pursuing a Vedāntic way of life - and who are especially interested in knowing the futility and falsity of this present-day erroneous theory of Mūlāvidyā as also who are, at the same time, devoted to learn the genuine traditional methodology - as expounded by Shri Śaṅkara in and through his extant Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas, which is like an unshakeable pillar of strength - should necessarily study this text with all meticulous care to their own immense benefit. Here in this small treatise, only the most important points with authoritative sources from the original Bhāshyas are presented in a lucid manner.

It is hoped that the readers will unfailingly be convinced that - “Ādi Śaṅkara had not even an iota of intention - let alone purport - of propagating this bizarre theory of ‘Mūlāvidyā’ ” by the elucidation found in numerous Bhāshya statements. It is to be stressed here that there are many a hint and suggestion as to how to discern the non-dual Reality of Brahman or Ātman of Vedānta - not intellectually but Intuitionally so as to culminate in one’s own plenary experience here and now in this very life - without taking any recourse whatsoever to this ubiquitous but untrustworthy theory of Mūlāvidyā. By reading this small treatise even if a few students are induced to read Shri Śaṅkara’s original Bhāshyas for proper guidance, the purpose of publishing this booklet would be served.

**D. B. Gangolli.
Translator**

Abbreviations

Adhy. Bhā.	- Adhyāsa Bhāshya (Shri Sankara's Introduction to Brahma Sūtras).
Īśā. Bhā.	- Īśāvāsyā Upanishad Bhāshya. (Mantra Number)
Ka. Ta.	- Kalpataru - A commentary by Amalānanda on Bhāmatī (1917). In this, Bhāmatī and Parimala are also to be found (Chapter, text, Sūtra)
Ka. Bhā.	- Kathōpanishad Bhāshya (Chapter, Valli, Mantra)
Gītā. Bhā.	- Gītā Bhāshya (Chapter, Verse)
Chh. Bhā.	- Chhāndogyōpanishad Bhāshya (Chap. Khaṇḍa or Section, Mantra)
Tai. Bhā.	- Taittirīyōpanishad Bhāshya (Valli, Mantra)
Naī.	- Naishkarmya Siddhi (Chap. Khaṇḍa)
Pañ.	- Pañchapādikā (A sub-commentary believed to be written by Padmapādāchārya, a direct disciple of Shri Śaṅkara) - published by Vijayanagaram Samskr̥ita Granthāvali, 1891).
Bhā. Por.	- Bhāshya Portion (the English numbers indicate the portions or sections).
Pañ. Viv.	- Pañchapādikā Vivaraṇa (the sub-commentary written by Prakāśhātmayati on Pañchapādikā) - published by Vijayanagaram Sanskr̥ita Granthāvali, 1892)
Pra. Bhā.	- Prashnōpanishad Bhāshya (Prashna or question, Mantra)
Bṛi. Bhā.	- Bṛihadāraṇyakōpanishad Bhāshya (Chap. Brāhmaṇa, Mantra)
Bhā.	- Bhāmatī (A sub-commentary written by Vāchaspati Miśra on Shri Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtras) - published by Nirṇayasāgara Press, 1917)
Mān. Kā. Bhā.	- Māṇḍūkya Kārikā Bhāshya (Prakaraṇa, Kārika)
Mān. Bhā.	- Māṇḍūkyōpanishad Bhāshya (Mantra)
Muṇḍa. Bhā.	- Muṇḍakōpanishad Bhāshya (Muṇḍaka, Khaṇḍa, Mantra)

[The Bhā. Por. numbers mentioned pertain to the portions of the Bhāshyas in Kannada published by Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya]

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SRI SRI SACHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATHI SWAMIJI

Born: 5-1-1880

Maha Samadhi: 5-8-1975

THE PRISTINE PURE ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY OF ADI SHANKARA

शङ्करं शङ्कराचार्यं केशवं बादरायणम् ।

सूत्रभाष्यकृतौ वन्दे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः ॥

I. Introduction

**The Impediments, Snags that are Encountered While
Determining the Philosophy of Shri Śaṅkara.**

That the revered Shri Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda wrote his commentaries on Prasthānatraya (the triad of canonical texts) and had bestowed his benign grace upon humanity itself is a fact known to all readers of this small booklet. The fact as to which are the fundamental teachings of Shri Śaṅkara's philosophy is also, to a great extent, universally popular by now. "By virtue of beginningless *Avidyā* (ignorance), *Jīva* (soul) is experiencing the trials and tribulations of *Samsāra* (transmigratory existence, life). If this *Avidyā* is got rid of by means of *Advitīya* (non-dual) *Brahmavidyā* (Self-Knowledge), he attains directly the *Brahmaswarūpa* (essential nature of Brahman or the Absolute Reality) and becomes blissful." Thus that great teacher's spiritual instruction is that - "By means of *Brahmavidyā*, to attain *Brahmaswarūpa* is the prime purport of human beings (*Parama Purushārtha*)."

What is the *Swarūpa* (essential nature) of the *Vidyā* taught by that *Ācharyā* (preceptor) ? Which is that *Avidyā* that is destroyed by it ? What is the method of destroying *Avidyā* by means of *Vidyā* ? How come by that method

we attain *Mōksha* (Liberation, Beatitude) which is the *Parama Purushārtha* ? - it is but natural that all these questions arise in the minds of *Āstikas* (believers in the authority of the *Śāstra* as a sacred source for knowing all religious and metaphysical truths) who are rational or discriminative in their outlook. It is not possible for the common run of people to find out easily the answers to these questions. For, many of us are not familiar with Sanskrit language ; even if we know a little of Sanskrit, when we examine the small texts believed to be published as 'Works written by Shri Śaṅkara', it is found that in each one of them the methodology described therein varies ; if we ask the scholars, each one of them describes or explains Advaita in a different way altogether. It being so, it has become almost an impossible task for *Mumukshus* (seekers of Liberation) to discern the genuine *Siddhānta* (non-dual philosophy).

Differences of Opinion Among Scholars Too

Doubts with regard to Śaṅkara's *Siddhānta* do not arise only among those who are not knowing Sanskrit, but also among the scholars as they entertain variant opinions in this matter ; for the *Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya* of Shri Śaṅkara there are two sub-commentaries, viz, *Pañchapādikā* and *Bhāmati*. Further there are commentaries on these sub-commentaries. Although these two principal sub-commentaries (i.e. *Pañchapādikā* and *Bhāmati*) are written with a view to explaining the opinion (teachings) of Shri Śaṅkara alone, not only that these sub-commentators have interpreted one and the same sentence differently in thier own method but also have described

the entire methodology of the *Siddhānta* (final spiritual tenets) in totally different ways. Further the followers of one sub-commentary of one *Vyākhyāna* (sub-commentary) have objected to the interpretation of the followers of the rival sub-commentary. This melee of criss-cross argumentations between them has given rise to hundreds of inner factions among the Advaitins. Among them only a few have been exemplified by Appayya Dīkshitar, a renowned scholar, in his popular work called '**Siddhānta Lesha Saṅgraha**'. No one has attempted till now to explain to the general public so as to reconcile all the various theories of these groups in a satisfactory manner. Those who endeavour to examine in depth the whole gamut of these texts get perplexed and feel as if they have entered a vast forest unable to find a way-out. Erudite scholars study some of them and somehow get satisfied, saying : "All texts undertake the task of teaching Advaita alone ; only the approaches or paths of depicting the Siddhānta are different, that is all" - and have written some texts with that belief. But because of the reason that the profound (terse) texts that they have written are bristling with subtle logical arguments, it is not possible for all the present-day scholars to digest them. Therefore, many people opine that - "All are great personalities ; all of them have propounded one and the same topic in various ways" and while reading or explaining a particular text they are trying to do so by elucidating the methodology contained in the text to others according to their own understanding. In fact, a sincere effort to discern or cognize *Advaita* (non-dual Reality) in any particular manner (methodology), is not

undertaken whole-heartedly by them. “In the ultimate analysis, Advaita alone stands out unassailed” - thus they entertain a strong, steadfast faith and read various texts. Under the circumstances, with regard to their behaviour or style of living, between them and the rest of the *Dvaitins* (dualists) there exists no difference whatsoever ; there is no possibility of any change occurring in this regard. For, they believe that in this *Kali* era it is not possible to practise Advaita philosophy, and just like the rest of the people they too are engrossed in mundane, workaday transactions.

The Two Methodologies in Vogue Today

The teaching method of Advaita Vedānta in vogue today is, in the main, following or adopting two *Prasthānas* (approaches) called ‘*Vivarāṇa Prasthāna*’, ‘*Bhāmatī Prasthāna*’ ; to wit, two schools of pedagogics which propound and explain Shri Śaṅkara’s teachings (philosophy) in two different ways :

(a) That school or methodology which follows the text called ‘*Vivarāṇa*’ which is a sub-commentary on ‘*Pañchapādikā*’ as the authoritative text is called ‘*Vivarāṇa Prasthāna*’;

(b) that school or methodology which follows ‘*Bhāmatī*’, which is a sub-commentary on *Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya* of Shri Śaṅkara as its main source is called ‘*Bhāmatī Prasthāna*’. Although both these disputants profess to be followers of Shri Śaṅkara and his original *Bhāshyas*, their methodologies or theories are parting away from each other in different directions like the Ganges and the Sindhu rivers. But these worthies are under the delusion

that ultimately these rivers are reaching the ocean and merging in it.

The Present-day State of Vedānta Philosophy

Because of the reason that as generations pass by, the erudition in Vedantic philosophy has been steadily diminishing, those who have thoroughly studied or closely scrutinized either *Vivaraṇa* or *Bhāmati* are very few in number. To add to our misfortune, nowadays the thorough and complete study of the original Bhāshyas of Shri Śaṅkara is on the wane, which is a highly regrettable event, nay a great bane, of our times. The majority of students feel fully satisfied merely reading and learning some lessons from brief commentaries on Īśa and other Upanishads, Gītā Bhāshya, some portions in Chhāndōgya and Bṛihadāraṇyaka - which are the two voluminous Upanishads - and Sūtra Bhāshya. There are also some students who study texts like *Nyāyanirṇaya*, *Ratnaprabha* - which are the modern commentaries. Really speaking, it will not be wrong or an exaggeration if it is said that the present-day Vedānta (i.e. Advaita Vedānta) as propounded by the present-day scholars has merged in *Tarkashāstra* (dialectics or logic). For, many scholars read the original Bhāshyas merely as a pretext or for name's sake - or without even reading them - and get fully satisfied by studying some *Prakarāṇa Granthas* (texts written by several individuals) popularly believed to be the original works of Shri Śaṅkara. It has become a convention among such scholars or professors to study secondary treatises based on Nyāya and Vaisheshika schools of philosophy like - “*Tarkasangraha*”, “*Dīpikā*”,

“*Muktāvali*”, “*Rāmarudri*”, “*Dinakari*” and thereafter to spend greater time and effort in mind-boggling logical texts like “*Vedānta-paribhāṣā*”, “*Shikhāmaṇi*”, “*Advaita siddhi*”, “*Brahmānandi*”. Since in those texts the methodologies based on dialectics, which are needed to answer or solve, in the main, those objections which are raised against Advaita philosophy by followers of Shri Rāmānujā chārya and Shri Madhwāchārya, are profusely mentioned, it amounts to saying that the present-day Advaita Vedānta study means to learn a method of clashing swords with alien Vedāntins following the teachings of Shri Rāmānuja (called ‘Vishishtādvaita’ philosophy) and of Shri Madhwa (called ‘Dvaita’ philosophy). Thus as long as we are engaged and engrossed in the task of pounding a heap of seedless husk, how at all can we get either the forbearance or the leisure needed to find out the truth or ground reality by comparing the principal, original Bhāshyas and the various Vyākhyānas on them ?

Need for Studying the Original Texts

If at all we wish to mitigate this chaotic state of affairs, we should, first of all, acquire the unstinted faith and assurance that Vedānta will surely and unfailingly help us attain here and now bliss and peace. The system of studying and practising thoroughly, completely the original works of Bhāshyas, which rid one of the addiction or craze for dry, vain logic and enable one to aspire for *Purushārtha* (goal of human existence), is to be found to have been adopted by some highly qualified, evolved people. The *Jijñāṣus* (seekers of Self-Knowledge) should realize the truth that at best the *Vyākhyānas* (sub-com-

mentaries, in general) are instruments or means to help us reckon the true meaning or import of the original Bhāshyas and not that they are in themselves, independently, authoritative texts or sources. With the strong belief that earlier this task is achieved the better it would be for everyone's well-being, we had written and published a Sanskrit treatise entitled - “**Shri Śāṅkaraḥṛidayam or Mūlāvidyānirāsaḥ**” - in the 30's. Some scholars who had read that book agreed that the conclusion drawn in that text was quite proper, rational. We further published the Kannada translations of some texts of the Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas with a view to spreading this teaching (methodology) among those who do not know Sanskrit language. Many people knowing Kannada who read those translations understood that Vedānta is full of several excellent and profound deliberations and sagacious thoughts intimately related to human life and lent their patronage, moral support to this task. But some scholars of our country especially are engaged in spreading the canard that - “The teachings and deliberations that we have published in ‘**Shri Śāṅkaraḥṛidayam**’ are opposed to the *Sampradāya* (traditional methodology)” - at various places and are vitiating the minds of Āstikas ; thus we have come to know of late. Therefore, in order to solve the doubts of Jijñāsus who are not able to read Sanskrit and understand it, we have written this small book. We humbly plead with the discriminative readers to discern that this is the sacred *Brahmavichāra* (deliberation on the Ultimate, Absolute Reality of the Vedic lore) which gives rise to *Paramashreyas* (the profound, final Beatitude), and without giving any scope whatsoever for attachment and

hatred, they should dedicate all their time and efforts in cognizing the Reality of the Self.

The Essential Nature of the Differences in Approach

It has been mentioned above that the methodologies which signify the Vedānta philosophy are, for the time being, mainly two. It is necessary for the true seekers to get acquainted a little more with those variant approaches. For, among the scholars too nowadays there are very few who have meticulously studied the original works of these Prasthānas completely.

For the Vivaraṇa Prasthāna the sub-commentary called *Pañchapādikā* is the authoritative source. If we observe the name, it becomes quite but natural to get misguided, deluded to believe that in this sub-commentary there is an elaboration of the first five *Pādas* (sections, chapters) of Brahma Sūtra. But, in truth, in it there is no commentary on even one Pāda completely. There is an explanation of the Bhāṣhya on the first four *Sūtras* (aphorisms) only. It is written in texts like ‘Mādhaviya Śaṅkaravijaya’ etc. that ‘Pañchapādikā’ was written by Padmapāda, a direct disciple of Shri Śaṅkara, and that in it due to certain unspecified causes only five Pādas remained and further among them only four Sūtra portions are now in vogue. If we examine the original text we do not come across any valid evidence to say that this sub-commentary was written by Shri Padmapāda or that he wrote the commentary only on five Pādas. Even the Vivaraṇakāras have not opined that this is authored by Padmapāda ; nor have they mentioned that its size or contents are only so much. At certain places there do

exist indications or pointers to conclude that the Pañcha pādikākāra had the intention of writing a sub-commentary on the entire Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya (of Shri Śaṅkara). Whatever it may be, among the explanatory sub-commentaries on Sūtra Bhāshya that we have come across, **Pañchapādikā** is itself the most ancient. The numerous new logical devices that exist in *Vivaraṇa* (explanatory commentary) strengthen one's conviction and have thereby become means of immense value to elucidate the methodology of **Pañchapādikā Prasthāna** to the seekers of Vedānta philosophy. The author of 'Vivaraṇa' is one **Prakāshātmayati**. This Vivaraṇakāra has exhibited exemplary zeal, zest while refuting the theories of Bhāskarāchārya who has raised many an objection at various places against Shri Śaṅkara's Bhāshya. The most important feature is that not only has this Vivaraṇakāra elaborated upon and elucidated the essential nature of Avidyā which Bhāskarāchārya has taken up for refutation but also has, in the process, explained in full detail 'the theory of Mūlāvidyā' (called in Vedāntic circles - 'Mūlāvidyāvāda') which is indicated or suggested briefly in Pañchapādikā. Although in this sub-commentary, for certain sentences found in its original source (i.e. Pañchapādikā) there are to be found some contradictions, on the whole both these treatises, viz. Panchapādikā and Vivaraṇa, are propounding one and the same opinion ; this much is enough to serve the purport of this small book and hence assuming thus we carry on further discussion on this topic.

For the **Bhāmatī Prasthāna** the original authoritative source is **Vāchaspati Mishra's Sūtra-Bhāshya Tīka** (sub-commentary on Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya of Shri Śaṅkara).

In this treatise although there do appear certain logical devices found in Pañchapādikā, the manner in which the Vedāntic methodology is propounded and presented is extremely different from it. Because of the reason that in Bhāmatī also satisfactory answers to Bhāskarāchārya's objections are provided, it becomes quite clear that, just like the Vivaraṇakāra, Vāchaspati Mishra too belonged to a post-Bhaskara period alone. There is enough reason even to believe or surmise that this commentator had written his sub-commentary earlier than the Vivaraṇakāra. For, like the latter this Vāchaspati Mishra has not acknowledged Mūlāvidyā. Nor has this commentator even touched upon any one of the *Yuktis* (logical devices) which the Vivaraṇāchārya has utilized in support of (or to establish) Mūlāvidyā. Even so, Amalānanda, who has written a sub-commentary on Bhāmatī, has believed ardently that even to Vāchaspati Mishra this Mūlāvidyā theory was acceptable. Following in the footsteps of this writer (i.e. Amalānanda), many modern scholars are entertaining this opinion alone.

The manner in which Shri Sureśwarāchārya, who is famous as the direct disciple of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, has explained the latter's Siddhānta is totally different from both these Prasthānas (i.e. Panchapādika or presently in vogue as Vivaraṇa Prasthāna and Bhāmatī Prasthāna). He has not written a *Vyakhyāna* (sub-commentary) on Brahma Sūtra. However, there is a legend mentioned in Śaṅkaravijaya that Shri Śaṅkara had attempted to get a Vyākhyāna written on Brahma Sūtra by Shri Sureśwara, but the other disciples did not agree to that proposal and eventually prevailed upon the teacher to get it written by

Shri Padmapāda alone. Further on, it is written in that legend that then Shri Śaṅkara foretold in the manner : “You (i.e. Shri Sureśwara) will in future become Vāchaspati and will write a complete sub-commentary on Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya”. But, actually speaking, because of the reason that there exists a contradiction in the matter of some very important points themselves between Shri Sureśwarāchārya’s Vedānta methodology and that propounded by Shri Vāchaspati Misra, we cannot give any value or importance to this story. Among all the texts supposed to have been authored by Shri Sureśwara only three viz. *Naishkarmya-Siddhi*, *Taittirīyōpanishad Bhāshya Vārtika* and *Bṛhadāraṇyakōpanishad Bhāshya Vārtika* - are important. The question whether the other so-called treatises had been written by him or not will have to be determined by comparing their methodology with that which is found in these three texts. All Vedāntins revere the Vārtikakāra ; but though those who study his treatises in depth are reckoned to be almost nil, they are very few in number. Therefore, **Vārtika Prasthāna** is a name which cannot possibly be heard in a seminar of learned scholars.

Vedāntic Methodology According to Vivaraṇa School

Now it is necessary to indicate as to how the opinions (teachings) of the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) have undergone mutations, nay mutilations, in recent times as presented by the above-mentioned Prasthānās (i.e. Vivaraṇa and Bhāmatī). Especially, because of the reason that those who have not understood at least briefly (the gist of) this topic of Mūlāvidyā as propounded by the

Vivaraṇa Prasthāna will not be able to discern at all what we intend explaining in this treatise, that topic has per force to be mentioned here.

(a) What is the Swarūpa (Essential Nature) of Avidyā ? What is its Function ?

In *Ātma Chaitanya* (Pure Consciousness of the Self) there exists an *Anādi* (beginningless) *Anirvāchya* (indefinable, indescribable) *Avidyā* (ignorance) - (Pañchapādikā 4). Because of the reason that it is dependent upon beginningless *Chaitanyasattā* (Pure Existence or Reality of Consciousness) it is *Anādi* - (Pañch. 4) ; because of the reason that it is neither *Sat* (Reality) nor *Asat* (unreality) it is *Anirvachaniya* (indefinable or indescribable) - (Vivaraṇa 207). It has many names like *Nāmarūpa* (names and forms), *Avyākṛita* (unmanifest), *Avidyā* (ignorance), *Māyā* (illusion), *Prakṛiti* (primordial matter), *Agrahaṇa* (non-comprehension), *Avyakta* (unmanifest), *Tamas* (darkness) ; *Kāraṇa* (cause), *Laya* (dissolution), *Shakti* (power, potency), *Mahāsupti* (the great sleep), *Nidrā* (sleep), *Akshara* (imperishable), *Ākāśa* (empty space) etc., (Pañch. 20). Due to its covering alone the *Ātmaswarūpa* (essential nature of the Self) is not illumined or cognized ; for the appearance of the world too it alone is the cause (Pañch. 14) ; for, the entire world is verily its *Pariṇāma* (transformation) - (Pañch. 13). Avidyā does not mean an *Abhava* (non-entity) of the nature of not knowing (*Agrahaṇa* or non-comprehension); nor is it of the nature of wrong knowledge (*Mithyājñāna* or misconception), nor is it its *Samskāra* (latent or potential impression, proclivity) - (Vivaraṇa 16). It is *Ajñāna* (lack of knowledge) which is *Jñānavirōdhi* (opposite of

knowledge) and *Bhāvarūpa* (of a substantive nature). This is the cause for all *Samsāra* (transmigratory life) ; it exists uninterruptedly even in all the three *Avasthās* (states of Consciousness) till one attains *Mōksha* (Liberation) - (Vivaraṇa 16). In *Sushupti* (deep sleep) this exists associated with *Vikshepa Samskāra* (latent tendency of projection or dispersal) covering up the Self (Pañch. 5, 20 ; Vivaraṇa 16) ; whereas in waking it gets transformed into the form of *Ahaṅkāra* (ego, I-notion) - (Pañch. 20). This alone is the *Upādānakāraṇa* (material cause) for *Adhyāsa* (misconception) which is of the nature of knowing by mixing *Ātman* (Self) and *Anātman* (not-self) one in the other mutually - (Vivaraṇa 12).

(b) What are the Valid Means or Evidences to Establish Avidyā which is Bhāvarūpa (of Substantive, Material Nature) ?

The *Pratyakshānubhava* (perceptual experience) of the type of - “I am an ignorant person” ; the *Anumāna* (inference) which determines or decides, by means of the illustration of a lamp so as to be able to remove a particular kind of substantive cover, which is opposed to non-existence, by *Pramāṇajñāna* (knowledge born out of valid means) ; the *Arthāpatti* (presumption or inference used to account for an apparent inconsistency) of the type - “In the Pure or Absolute Brahman the possibility of *Ahaṅkāra* to appear cannot arise without the existence of *Upādāna Kāraṇa* (material cause) of *Mithyārūpa* (an unreal form) ; the *Śruti* (scriptural statement) which says that - “Because of the reason that in deep sleep there exists a false or unreal cover therein the *Brahma Swarūpa*

(the essential nature of the Reality) is not shining or illumined” ; the Śrutyārthāpatti (the presumption indicated in the scriptures itself) of the type - “Because of the reason that there is a statement in the scriptures that by means of *Vidyā* (Self-Knowledge) alone *Mōksha* (Liberation) accrues, the cover of *Avidyā* (ignorance) which is the cause for *Bandha* (bondage) should necessarily exist therein” - these five reasons are the *Pramāṇas* (valid means of evidence) for *Avidyā*. One should not doubt in the manner - “If it is established by so many *Pramāṇas* it amounts to saying that it (i.e. *Avidyā*) is *Satya* (real entity) alone !” ; for, by means of these *Pramāṇas* it is known to be not an *Abhāva* (non-entity or non-existent thing), that is all. Really speaking, *Bhāvarūpāvidyā* (ignorance which is of the nature of a substantive, existent entity) is verily *Sākshivedya* (cognized by the Witnessing Consciousness) - (Vivaraṇa 12, 13, 42, 43).

(c) To Whom has *Avidyā* Entailed ? In Which Aspect or Subject-matter ?

To wit : For *Ātman*, with regard to *Ātman* Himself, there need not be various stipulations of the type - “The substratum or support has to be separate ; the object has to be separate ; for, it is an entity or substance (*Padārtha*) like darkness and is *Anirvachanīya* (indescribable). One may reasonably ask the questions like - “To whom is *Jñāna* (knowledge) ? In which matter or topic ?” This *Bhāvarūpa* (nature of being a substantive entity) *Ajñāna* (ignorance or lack of knowledge) is opposed to *Jñāna* and hence, just like *Jñāna*, for *Ajñāna* too there should necessarily be separate *Āśhraya* (substratum) and separate

Vishaya (object) - thus there exists *Bhrānti* (delusion) - (Vivaraṇa 43). This delusion is not at all *Antaḥkaraṇa Āshraya* (dependent upon, or lurking in, the Mind) ; it rests in or depends upon *Ātmaswarūpa* alone- (Vivaraṇa 45) ; similarly, for this *Ajñāna* - the *Ātmaswarūpa* alone is the *Vishaya* (object) - (Vivaraṇa 46).

(d) How does the *Avidyā* get Removed or Destroyed ?

It is removed by *Tattvajñāna* (Knowledge of Reality). If both *Ajñāna* and its *Kārya* (effect) are destroyed so that they do not recur or reappear, then it amounts to saying that its *Nivṛtti* (release, freedom) is achieved - (Vivaraṇa 34). Although in our workaday, empirical transactions the delusions of the type of sea-shell appearing as silver that occur to us are verily the effect or product of this *Mūlāvidyā*, *Avidyā* (ignorance) does not get destroyed by *Jñāna* of *Shukti* (sea-shell) etc. ; then (at that juncture) the silver etc., get *Laya* (merged) in their cause of *Avidyā*, that is all. (Vivaraṇa 14) ; Or, in the alternative, then, it can be stated that *Avidyās* (called *Tūlāvidyā*) which are *Avasthārūpa* (variant forms of state) of *Mūlāvidyā* get destroyed - (Vivaraṇa 15). Only when the *Tattvajñāna* (Knowledge of Reality) accrues *Avidyā* gets completely destroyed. Some people may doubt in the manner - “Can there be any destruction of beginningless *Avidyā* ?” ; but although *Prāgabhāva* (non-existence before birth) etc., are *Anādi* (beginingless), just as the logicians etc. have accepted that they have destruction, the *Avidyā*, which is *Anādi* and *Bhāvarūpa* (of the substantive nature), also may be acknowledged to be having destruction (Vivaraṇa

96). It is true that Jñāna has removed the three phenomena of *Jñānābhava* (absence or non-existence of knowledge), *Samshayajñāna* (doubtful knowledge) and *Mithyājñāna* (wrong, false knowledge) ; where is an illustration to affirm that (Jñāna) destroys Mūlavidyā which is totally different from all such phenomena and which is *Bhāvarūpa* ? - thus any one may question. In truth, because of the reason alone that Jñānābhavā etc. are *Virōdhi* (opposed to) Jñāna, they are destroyed by means of Jñāna ; the Mūlavidyā too that we propound, because it is a *Virōdhi* to Jñāna, it also can possibly be removed by Jñāna (Vivaraṇa 15).

(e) What is the Swarūpa (Essential Nature) of Vidyā Which Removes Avidyā ?

The Jñāna of the type - “Brahman which is *Nishprapañcha* (devoid of any world of duality) is Itself I am” - is itself Vidyā (Vivaraṇa 67). By means of *Vedāntavākyaśravaṇa* (listening to the sentence of the Upanishad) which is *Śāstravihita* (as stipulated by the scripture by way of an injunction) the *Vākyaajñāna* (knowledge born out of the sentence) accrues ; the *Adhikāri* (qualified seeker) who aspires for *Purushārtha* (the ultimate goal of human life) by himself practises it over and over again ; as a result of these two, *Aparōksha Jñāna* (the direct Intuitive Knowledge) accrues (Vivaraṇa 205). This alone is Vidyā.

(f) Does Duality Appear to the Jñānis, or Not ?

Although *Sṛishṭi* (creation) etc. do exist externally, duality does not appear to a Jñāni. Just as to the blind

men - though there exists colour outside - it does not appear, in the same way, to a Jñāni who is devoid of misconception of the mind (*Antaḥkaraṇādhyāsa*) there is no *Pramāṇatwa* (cognizership) whatsoever ; and hence to him duality does not appear (Vivarāṇa 203). Or in the alternative, for this another answer can be given ; although due to *Prārabdha Karma* (action that has ripened to give its fruit in this birth) to him duality may appear ; due to that there is no harm or danger caused to him. For, to him on certain occasions in *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* (trance devoid of any conscious cognition of duality) there accrues cognition of *Ātmaikatwa* (unity or non-duality of the Self) ; due to *Karmavasha* (being within the purview or control of Karma) duality is being seen. Therefore, though he sees duality it is as good as his not seeing it (Vivarāṇa 205). Even after *Avidyā* is removed by means of *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge) the former remains, subsists in the form of *Samskāra* (latent impression) ; therefore duality also may be seen. By repeatedly practising *Tattvajñāna* (Knowledge of the Reality) this *Avidyā samskāra* (latent impressions of ignorance) also gets removed. Such *Samskāra* is also called 'Avidyāleśha' (Vivarāṇa 106).

(g) When is it that Duality does not Appear in the least ?

Jñāni being associated with *Avidyāleśha* becomes *Jīvanmukta* (liberated while being embodied and living) and when that (*Avidyāleśha*) too is destroyed, thereafter he gives up his mortal coil (i.e. the body) and becomes *Videhamukta* (liberated after giving up the body) - (Vivarāṇa 106). In the manner so far mentioned when the

whole gamut of *Adhyāsa* (misconception) is gone without any duality being visible and if unlimited infinite bliss or happiness is illumined or shining, then to get established as the Brahmaswarūpa is itself *Mōksha* (Beatitude). For Vedāntic *Vichāra* (deliberation) this alone is the resultant purport or benefit accruing (Vivarāṇa 203).

The Vedānta Methodology According to Bhāmatī School

Although the *Bhāmatīkāra* (founder of Bhāmatī school of philosophy) has not accepted 'Mūlāvidyā', the post-Śaṅkara Vyākhyānakāras maintain that he too has accepted the theory of Mūlāvidyā. Even if we, for the time being, keep this topic aside, it is quite certain that Shri Vāchaspati Mishra, the founder of this school of Bhāmatī, on many occasions has strayed away from the beaten track or path of Shri Śaṅkara and has utilised many portions of the methodologies of an ancient scholar by name Shri Maṇḍana Mishra as he liked ; as a result, Shri Vāchaspati Mishra has clearly formulated, propounded his own but a new methodology. Later on, while discussing the teachings of Shri Śaṅkara, this topic may be of some utility. We have given here the gist of this school of philosophy.

What is the Essential Nature of Avidyā ? What is its Function ?

In the *Jīva* (soul), from time immemorial there are two Anirvāchya (indescribable) Avidyās viz. *Kāraṇāvidyā* and *Kāryāvidyā*. *Kāryāvidyā* is of the form or nature of *Adhyāsa* (misconception) - (Bhām. 40). 'Vivekāgrahaṇa' (non-comprehension or lack of discrimination) is itself

Kāraṇāvidyā (Bhām. 16). Because of the reason that due to Jīvatwa, Adhyāsa is being caused and vice versa (i.e. in a perennial sequence) both Adhyāsa and Jīvatwa, like the seed and the sprout, are *Anādi* (beginningless) - (Bhām. 45). Whether it is *Mithyājñāna* (false knowledge) or its *Samskāra* (latent impression) - without one of them being behind the other - they do not exist at all ; due to the Samskāra of the previous Mithyājñāna the *Adhyāsa* (misconception) of the present body, senses etc. has occurred ; further, through the instrumentality of these body, senses etc., this very Adhyāsa keeps on occurring (Bhām. 17). This Avidyā is the cause for the transaction of *Samsāra* (transmigratory existence) - (Bhām. 16). *Kāryāvidyā* is called 'Vikshepa' and *Kāraṇāvidyā* is called 'Laya'. In *Sushupti* (deep sleep) as well as in *Pralaya* (dissolution of the world of duality or the entire creation) there exist the *Samskāra* (potential aspect) of Vikshepa as also *Laya Lakshaṇāvidyā* (the ignorance having the symptoms of Laya or merger) - (Bhām. 335). In *Pralaya* everything remains merged in *Kāraṇāvidyā* (Bhām. 333). In *Sushupti*, *Prāṇa* (the vital force) alone subsists (Bham. 335). Although in *Bhāmatī* the genuine statements to support the theory that they have acknowledged *Mūlāvidyā*, which is separate or different from their Laya and Vikshepa, is not to be found - because of the reason that they have opined that in *Pralaya* everything in the *Sūkshma Shaktirūpa* (form of subtle power or potency) exists in *Kāraṇāvidyā* (Bham. 333), it amounts to saying that in a particular sense Shri Vāchaspati Mishra too has accepted *Bhāvāvidyā* (substantive ignorance) ; especially the author of 'Kalpataru' who is a *Vyākhyānakāra* (post-Śaṅkara sub-commentator)

has stridently, so to say, expressed that in Bhāmatī this (i.e. Mūlāvidyā theory) is accepted - (Ka. Ta. 333). In order to establish Bhāvāvidyā no valid reasons or evidences have been provided in Bhāmatī ; whereas, the Kalpatarukāra has followed the method or system of Vivaraṇa alone in this regard and written his treatise.

To Whom Does Avidyā Attach Itself ? In Which Regard ?

For Avidyā the Jīvas are the *Āshraya* (substratum, support) ; *Vishaya* (the object) is Brahman. Just as the rope is the support or substratum for the appearance of a snake brought about or caused due to Avidyā, in the same way Brahman is the substratum for the world of duality, projected by the Jīva's Avidyā, as a *Vivarta Upādāna* (material cause which is an apparent or illusory form) ; hence, "Though Avidyā has really rested in or is supported by Jīva alone, it has been supported by Īśwara - thus the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) has stated" - this is the opinion of the Bhāmatīkāra (Bhām. 378). Because of the reason that it cannot possibly be determined and declared that - "Whether this Avidyā is different (or separate) or not from either Īśwara or Jīva" - it is *Anirvāchya* (indescribable, indefinable) - (Bhām. 377). ; for this, there are also other names like *Māyā*, *Avyakta*, *Avyākṛita* etc. This Avidyā exists in each Jīva as a separate phenomenon ; even so, because of the reason that everything is verily Avidyā, it is being addressed in a singular number (Bhām. 377, 328) - thus Shri Vāchaspati Mishra has opined ; this opinion is a special, exclusive feature of this Prasthāna.

How Does Avidyā Get Removed, Destroyed ?

Avidyā is destroyed or removed by Vidyā. That Jīva who attains Vidyā - his Avidyā alone gets destroyed (Bhām. 377). Because of the reason that *Jīvatwa* (soulhood) is caused by Adhyāsa which is of the form of *Mithyāñāna* (wrong, false knowledge) it is removed by *Tattvajñāna* (Knowledge of the Reality) - (Bhām. 45). The question to the effect - “Is there any destruction to beginningless Ajñāna ?” - does not seem to have been deliberated upon in Bhāmatī.

What is the Swarūpa of Vidyā Which Removes Avidyā ?

It (Vidyā) is a particular *Antahkaraṇa Vṛtti* (mental concept or thought-construct) of the form of *Advitīya* (non-dual) *Brahmasākshātkāra* (materialisation or actualisation of the Ultimate Reality). It not only removes Avidyā but also shows up *Brahmaswarūpa* (essential nature of the Absolute Reality) - (Bhām. 89). This also is just like the *Sākshātkāra* (visualisation or developing a special subtle sense) of the *Shaḍjādi Swaras* (six notes of a scale) in music ; the *Samskāra* (subtle impression) alone gained by spiritual practices like *Śravaṇa* (listening to scriptural teachings), *Manana* (reasoning or deliberation on what is heard) etc. become the cause or means for it (Bhām. 114). *Śravaṇa* and *Manana* mean *Dhāraṇa* ; *Nididhyāsana* (contemplation) means *Dhyāna* ; *Darshana* means *Samādhi* (Bhām. 615). This *Sākshātkāra* (materialisation) removes the *Sākshātkāra* of *Prapañcha* (the world of duality) and since this itself is included in the *Prapañcha*, it destroys itself also (Bhām. 150).

Can a Jñāni, being Embodied, Carry on Mundane Transactions ? How Come ?

Although Brahmasākshātkāra removes *Anārabdha Karma* (unbegun deed, action) it cannot get rid of *Prārabdha Karma* (that Karma or action which has already given its resultant fruit). For, since the *Prārabdha Karma* has already begun its effect, that Karma - which is very strong - needs a longer period of time to remove. There is no rule of law that merely on the advent of *Vidyā* (Self-Knowledge), which is opposed, all Karmas should instantly get destroyed. The statement in the Śāstra to the effect that - “After being Jīvanmuktas for some time, Jñānis experience the *Prārabdha Karma*” - also strengthens this *Yukti* (logical device). Because of the reason that *Dvaita* (duality) and *Vyavahāra* (empirical, mundane dealings) caused by it are *Anirvachanīya* (indescribable) that (i.e. *Dvaita*) is not at all *Paramārtha* (Absolute Reality). Therefore, there is no harm whatsoever done to *Vidyā* (Bhām. 958, 959).

After the *Prārabdha Karma* is exhausted Mukti accrues. In fact, Mōksha means to attain Brahmaswarūpa alone which is *Paramānandaghana* (verily a mass of Absolute Bliss), devoid of any Duḥkha (misery) whatsoever. Because of the reason that It is one's *Svabhāva* (essential nature) alone, It is not to be acquired afresh ; even so, due to *Anirvāchya Anādyavidyā* (indescribable beginningless ignorance) it appears as though It (i.e. Mōksha) is not attained ; though It is *Svayamprakāsha* (self-effulgent) it appears as though It has to be *per force* illumined by another ; though It is different from the body, the senses etc. it appears as though It is non-

different from them. When Avidyā is destroyed as stated above, it amounts to saying that one has attained Mōksha (Bhām. 78).

The Vedantaparakriya (Vedāntic Methodology) According to Vārtika Prasthāna (of Shri Sureśwara)

Even if it is briefly depicted here in this context as to what is the Vedāntic methodology as per the Vārtika (sub-commentaries on Taittirīya and Bṛihadāraṇyaka Bhāshyas of Shri Śaṅkara) written by Shri Sureśwara, it is sufficient. For, between the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara, his guru or preceptor) and the Vārtikākāra (i.e. Shri Sureśwara) in their respective methodologies there is not to be found any pronounced, profound differences at all. Not only has Shri Sureśwara followed the sentences of the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. his preceptor) and has written his *Vārtika* (sub-commentary) but also has adduced some *Yuktis* (logical devices) of Shri Śaṅkara by further strengthening them.

The Vārtikākāra has not accepted Mūlāvidyā like the Vivaraṇakāra ; just as the Bhāmatikāra has repeatedly mentioned, he has also not stated that only after *Jñānābhyāsa* (repeated practice of Jñāna) Avidyā gets destroyed. In fact, the salient feature of the Vārtika is the repeated proclamation in the manner - “By means of the *Jñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge) as suggested in the *Vedānta Mahāvākya* (pregnant or profound sentences of the Upanishads) alone all Ajñāna is destroyed ; in order that such a Jñāna accrues alone, *Vichāra* (Intuitive deliberation, discrimination) is quite essential”.

According to the Vārtika Prakriya - barring the

three aspects of *Ajñāna* (non-comprehension, ignorance), *Samshaya* (doubt), *Mithyājñāna* (misconception), for *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge which is Intuitive experience indeed), there is no other impediment or obstacle whatsoever (Vā. 4-4-787). *Ajñāna* itself is the *Tattwa* (essence, reality) of the other two variants of *Samshaya* and *Mithyājñāna* (Vā. 1-4-440). When from the *Ajñānadṛishti* (viewpoint of ignorance) we assume the two divisions of *Ātman* and *Anātman*, *Ajñāna* rests in or supported by *Ātman* (i.e. it appears to be superimposed upon the Self). It (i.e. *Ajñāna* or ignorance) has arisen in the matter of or pertaining to *Ātman* alone (Nai. 3-1). *Avidyā* gets destroyed or removed by *Jñāna* alone and not by anything else whatsoever ; it exists invariably in *Sushupti* (deep sleep) also (Nai. 3-58). *Avidyā* appears to be existing only in the *Avichāradasha* (state of non-discrimination) ; once *Jñāna* accrues, it cannot possibly subsist (Nai. 3-111, 113 ; 4-59 ; Vā. 2-3-192, 4-3-1181, 2-4-101). When *Jñāna* accrues, *Avidyā* completely gets destroyed ; not a trace of it remains or subsists (Nai. 3-117 ; Vā. 2-1-279, 2-4-437; Sam. Vā. 234). The *Brahmātmajñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge of the identity or unity of Brahman and *Ātman*) that is born from *Vedāntavākya* (Upanishadic sentence) is Itself the genuine, real *Vidyā* ; by means of It alone *Avidyā* gets destroyed. Thereafter a steadfast conviction to the effect that *Avidyā* does not exist in all the three periods of time i.e. past, present and future accrues (Nai. 3-47 ; Sam. Vā. 183). Because of the reason that by means of that, i.e. *Brahmātmajñāna*, born out of *Vedāntavākya* alone *Muktī* accrues, there is no need whatsoever of repeated practice of *Jñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge or

experience) - (Vā. 4-4-775 ; Sam. Vā. 438). Nididhyāsana does not mean Dhyāna ; it is Intuition or cognition by which that which is determined by means of Shravana and Manana is harmonised, matched, realized - (Vā. 2-4-217, 233). Because of the reason that it is not rational to say that even after Jñāna accrues Avidyā exists or persists - there is no need whatsoever for the *Dehapāta* (falling off of the mortal coil or body) for the sake of *Brahmaprāpti* (attainment of the Absolute, non-dual Reality) - (Vā. 4-4-560, 914, 956).

How Should We Carry Out the Deliberation in order to Determine the Bhāshyārtha

Because of the reason that thus the Vyākhyānakāras have conceived of various methodologies or theories and have described asserting in the manner - “This alone is exclusively the real meaning or import of the original (Shri Śaṅkara’s) Bhāshya” - the question as to which exactly is the true, genuine methodology of Shri Śaṅkara has *per force* to be determined only after deliberating once again. How to carry out this *Vichāra* (deliberation) ? This becomes an important question now. For, without a proper well-knit and organised system, the chances or possibility of the correct *Siddhānta* (philosophical, spiritual teachings) being discerned and divined by us will be remote indeed. Therefore, it becomes quite expedient and essential to formulate certain rules or norms to carry out this deliberation or discrimination. It is our sincere belief that the following rules should *per force* be observed for the purpose :

(i) Wherever, in any context, there has arisen any dispute or disparity of opinion among the Vyākhyānakāras, we should necessarily follow or adopt an opinion which has full support of the original and his own sentences (from the Bhāshyas) of Shri Śāṅkara.

Although there is no cause for us to doubt in the matter that all the Vyākhyānakāras are scholars, venerable and knowers of the traditional methodology, when these Vyākhyānakāras themselves, who are the disciples, do not accept one another's interpretations or opinions, before we follow any one of those factions, it is quite but reasonable to seek the consent and confirmation of Shri Śāṅkarāchārya. If in case there arises any opposition to or contradiction of *Śrūtis* (Upanishads) and *Smṛitis* - just as we have, as a rule of law, to accept the Śruti alone - here too we have per force to give the statement of Shri Śāṅkara the pride of place as also the honour ; this fact cannot possibly be ignored or refuted by any genuine follower of tradition.

(ii) It will have to be per force acknowledged that better than the Advaita Siddhānta established on the basis of the logical devices adopted by alien Bhāshyakāras for the purpose of refutation, the opinion or interpretation of the commentators belonging to the genuine Advaita Sampradāya should be given all the value and importance ; better than all others' opinions the opinion of the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śāṅkara) is of the utmost value.

Though howevermuch the other Bhāshyakāras may be endowed with immense sagacity and subtle viewpoints and may be erudite scholars, it is not possible at all to

believe that they had discerned or divined with deeper insight than the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) this Advaita philosophy which was not congenial or convenient to themselves. Especially when each and every Bhāshyakāra has interpreted and adopted the Advaita Siddhānta in a totally different manner, their statements or interpretations lose their veracity and value. In the present context Shri Rāmānujāchārya, who is Vishishtādvaitin, and Shri Madhwāchārya, who is Dvaitin, have not cared to go into the mind-boggling question of - “Between the Vivaraṇa Prasthāna, and Bhāmatī Prasthāna which is the real Shri Śaṅkara Prakriyā or methodology ?” - but have refuted both these post-Śaṅkara Prasthānas. Shri Bhāskarāchārya, who is a Bheda-Abhedavādin, has assumed that Advaitins in general propound that - “*Bheda Darshana* (perception of difference or manifoldness) is itself Avidyā” - and has endeavoured to refute Advaita Vedānta. Although Shri Maṇḍana Mishra, who was a contemporary of Shri Śaṅkara, has refuted one or two Yuktis mentioned in the Bhāshya in his own work of ‘Brahmasiddhi’ and has tried to establish Advaita philosophy by means of his own methodology, he has not raised a word about *Bhāvāvidyā* (substantive, materialistic ignorance). He has, in fact, called *Agrahaṇa* (non-comprehension) and *Mithyāñāna* (wrong knowledge or misconception) by the name ‘Avidyā’. In many deliberations or decisions, Brahmasiddhi is fit to be called the original source for Bhāmatī Prasthāna. For all these reasons, it will have to be *per force* concluded that - “On the basis of texts written by alien schools or factions for the purpose of refutation, the genuine methodology of Shri Śaṅkara cannot possibly be decided or established.”

(iii) In the event of any mutual contradiction arising among the *Prakarana Granthas* (their own treatises) which have become popular or famous as Shri Śaṅkara's original (*Prakarana*) texts, we should *per force* accept the *Mūlabhāshya* (original commentary of Shri Śaṅkara) as the genuine *Pramāṇa* (valid, authoritative source) and then only determine the *Tattwa* (the truth).

This is a norm or regulation of very great importance. For, several small treatises like *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*, *Aparōkshānubhūti*, *Shatashlōkī*, *Vākyavṛitti*, *Panchikarana*, *Upadeshasāhasri* etc. are staunchly believed by the general public to be those authored by Shri Śaṅkara. In some of these works it has been stridently affirmed that there exists a *Bhāvarūpa Avidyā* ; in some it has been stated that the wrong, erroneous knowledge (misconception) is itself *Avidyā* ; yet in some others merely by the *Vākya* (scriptural sentence) *Jñāna* accrues and thereafter for the *Jñāni* there is nothing remaining to be done at all ; in certain other texts it is stressed that even after the attainment of *Jñāna* the practitioner should repeatedly practise spiritual disciplines like *Śravaṇa* etc. so as to get it fully established ; in some other texts it is stated that it is quite necessary to practise *Yōgic* exercises and that without the attainment of *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* no one can possibly get *Aparōksha Jñāna* (direct, innate Knowledge of the Reality or Self). Because of the reason that in this manner with regard to very important points of consideration of the methodology itself there are found to be many opinions which are totally opposite or contradictory, merely on the basis or strength of these *Prakarana Granthas* (treatises

written by individuals on certain aspects of philosophy), it is impossible to determine the *Siddhānta* (genuine philosophical teachings) of Shri Śaṅkara ; this fact becomes very clear in the light of these observations.

(iv) We should acknowledge the dictum that in the Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas too while deciding particular questions or matters, *Tatpara Vākyas* (those sentences which are used to denote the Ultimate or Absolute Reality) are themselves powerful, dominant.

At many places in Shri Śaṅkara's Bhāshyas one particular opinion is refuted by the logical devices of a rival school of philosophy ; but merely on that count it is not possible to decide and declare immediately that those refuting logical devices are themselves Shri Śaṅkara's final, ultimate teaching. For example, in some contexts the logical devices of Buddhists are refuted by other logical devices of *Tārkikas* (logicians) ; in certain other places those Yuktis of those *Tārkikas* are refuted by Yuktis of *Mīmāṃsakas* (ritualists) ; although such instances are to be seen in the Bhāshyas, when eventually the *Paramasiddhānta* (his own final spiritual teaching) is being discussed and delineated, those Yuktis of *Mīmāṃsakas* are also refuted by his own strong Yuktis ; this is an inimitable style of writing seen in his (Shri Śaṅkara's) commentaries and is a special feature in all of them. In the same way, although in some places he has written his commentaries following the teachings of Sāṅkhya and Yōga philosophies, when an occasion arises for him to expound more powerful teachings than those, he has come out with his own *Paramasiddhānta* ; this trend is to be seen in and through the Bhāshyas. It being so,

without deliberating incisively till the end, it is not possible to pick any one particular statement from a particular context and accept it as the most powerful teaching. Besides, while expounding the Siddhānta also Shri Śaṅkara talks according to the relevant level (situation) when discussing Karma, Upāsana etc. But at many places he has not at all stated his opinions which are of a higher level than these. Therefore, studying the relevant circumstances alone his real intentions are to be determined. Just as when the Śruti sentences appear to be mutually contradictory, we accept that teaching which is propounded as its intended purport to be the *Veda Vihita* (approved as an injunction by the Vedas), in the same way we should deliberate upon Shri Śaṅkara's sentences and decide about their *Balābala* (strength or otherwise) ; this is reasonable indeed.

(v) We should discern and decide the real and ultimate purport of Shri Śaṅkara's sentences which are pertaining to the deliberation on Self-Knowledge so that they are not contradictory either to *Yukti* (logical device) or *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience).

The fact that - "The Vedāntic sentences are not *Pramāṇa* (valid means or authoritative texts) merely because they are sentences, but in this context *Anubhava* etc. according to the circumstances are also needed here" - is stressed unequivocally by Shri Śaṅkara himself. Therefore, those topics which he has propounded in consonance with *Yukti* and *Anubhava* can be discarded or dislodged only by means of sentences backed up by more powerful or predominant *Yukti* or *Anubhava* ; but merely on the basis of assuming *Śruti Prāmāṇya* (authority or validity

of scriptures) and thereby asserting that - “This alone is Shri Śaṅkara’s opinion” - in an obstinate manner can never be approved by wise people. Here in this context for the word ‘*Anubhava*’ also there is a special significance ; that is : Shri Śaṅkara has on certain occasions mentioned about *Jīvanmuktas’ Anubhava* (realized souls’ experience) and *Yōgis’ Anubhava* (practitioners of Yōga school of philosophy - their experiences) etc. In such circumstances, those sentences therein are said to be *Āptavākyas* (well-wishers’ sentences) but not *Anubhava Vākyas* (sentences based on Intuitive experience) ; for, *Jijñāsus* (seekers) will have to *per force* believe those individualistic experiences of Yōgis on the basis of their (i.e. Jijñāsus’) reverence towards the utterances of Shri Śaṅkara, but those experiences cannot possibly be examined by them just then. But that subject-matter which is being propounded as a *Siddhānta* (spiritual teaching) based on or following *Lōkānubhava* (experience of the common people) - that being the *Sārvatrika Anubhava* (everyone’s or universal experience), it can be tested by the touchstone of their own experience, and for doing so everyone is fully qualified. We have called (implied here) such sentences alone to be those in consonance with *Anubhava*. It need not be gainsaid here that this kind of sentences strengthened or supported by *Anubhava* as also those *Yuktis* (logical devices) supported and sustained by such *Anubhavas* are the most important among all means or instruments with which we can determine Shri Śaṅkara’s *Siddhānta*. It is of utmost necessity that all those people who accept that *Advaita* (non-dualism) is a *Siddhānta* in consonance with *Anubhava* should keep this salient feature in mind all the time.

Adopting these five rules or regulations mentioned above alone, we will carry out the forthcoming deliberations. Readers who are ardent seekers of truth should meticulously discard that which is essenceless or irrelevant and grasp, discern that which is essential and edifying. Because of the reason that this subject is really a deliberation on the essential nature of one's own Ātman which is desirable to each and every human being (in fact, it is the *summum bonum* of human existence itself), here each one should, without giving any scope for *Rāga-Dvesha* (attachment, affinity ; and hatred or prejudice), search out the real truth. Here in this treatise, for every opinion we have adduced a sentence of Shri Śaṅkara in support and the essential Yuktis and Anubhava too have been shown at the relevant places. We have left the arduous task, nay responsibility, of judging as to how much reasonable and universally acceptable are our decisions or conclusions on the shoulders, so to speak, of our readers.

II. Deliberation on Avidyā

The Essential Nature of Avidyā

What is Avidyā ? - If at all Shri Śaṅkara has undertaken the exclusive task of providing an answer to this question anywhere, it is only in the 'Adhyāsa Bhāṣhya' which is the introduction to his Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya. The quintessence of what he has taken up for deliberation and discrimination in that Bhāṣhya is : The common run of people are reckoning both *Ātman* (Self) and *Anātman*

(not-Self) to be each other. *Ātman* is one who is the *Vishayi* (cognizing subject), *Chetana* (sentient), *Satya* (real) ; while *Anātman* is that which is the *Vishaya* (cognized object), *Jada* (gross, insentient), *Anṛita* (false, unreal). Not only have the people mistaken, misconceived the real *Ātman* and the false *Anātman* to be each other, but also they have mutually super-imposed the *Dharmas* (qualities) of one on the other to misconceive the *Dharmas* of one to be those of the other. This alone is *Adhyāsa* (misconception, delusion) ; this *Adhyāsa* is itself *Avidyā*. Here, it is better to keep in mind these three statements made by Shri Śaṅkara.

(i) “तमेतमेवलक्षणमध्यासं पण्डिता अविद्येति मन्यन्ते ॥ - meaning, ‘Whatever has been stated so far as *Adhyāsa* of this form or nature has been reckoned by scholars (wise people) to be *Avidyā*’ - (*Sūtra Bhāshya*, *Adhyāsa Bhāshya*. 4.)

(ii) ‘अध्यासोनामातस्मिंस्तद्वृद्धिरित्यवोचाम ॥’ - meaning, ‘*Adhyāsa* means to reckon that which it is not - thus we have already stated.’ (*Sūtra Bhā.* *Adhyāsa Bhā.* 10).

Adhyāsa means to conjure up, project. For this Shri Śaṅkara has used synonyms like *Adhyārōpa*, *Bhrānti*, *Mōha*, *Viparyaya*, *Viparyāsa*, *Vikalpa* in and through his *Bhāshyas*. To the word ‘*Mithyā*’ (false) the synonyms of *Jñāna* (knowledge) are added to formulate words like *Mithyājñāna*, *Mithyāpratyaya* etc. ; to the word ‘*Viparīta*’ (misconceived) the synonyms of *Jñāna* are added to formulate words like *Viparītajñāna*, *Viparītapratyaya*, *Viparītādhigama* etc. ; and to the word *Anyathā* (of different kind) the synonyms of the same word of *Jñāna* are added to formulate words like *Anyathājñāna*, *Anyathāgrahana* etc. and such words are found to be profusely used in the *Bhāshyas*.

While describing the essential nature of Avidyā in a particular context Shri Śaṅkara has written the following sentence :

(iii) 'तामसो हि प्रत्ययः आवरणात्मकत्वादविद्या विपरीतग्राहकः संशयोपस्थापको वा, अग्रहणात्मको वा । विवेकप्रकाशभावे तदभावात् । तामसे चावरणात्मके तिमिरादिदोषे सति अग्रहणादेरविद्यात्रयस्योपलब्धेः॥'

- (Sūtra Bhā.) (Gītā Bhā. 13-2)

Meaning : "Because of the reason that Avidyā is like a cover it is a *Pratyaya* (mental concept) of the nature of *Tāmasa* (darkness, non-comprehension) ; it (exists in the three forms of) wrongly signifying, creating doubt, and making something not known ; to wit, when the light of *Viveka* (discrimination) comes, that Avidyā does not exist ; only when a defect of the nature of *Tāmasa* of the type of cataract of the eye etc. exists, the triad of ignorance of the forms of not knowing, doubting or wrongly knowing is seen."

If we observe these three Bhāshya sentences, it will have to be admitted that Shri Śaṅkara has called all the three of - *Adhyāsa* (wrong knowledge, misconception) *Samshaya* (doubting), *Agrahaṇa* (non-comprehension) - by the word 'Avidyā'. Apart from these three, no other Avidyā has been mentioned by Shri Śaṅkara in his Bhāshyas. Especially the word 'Mūlāvidyā' is not to be seen anywhere at all. It is true that some people do interpret *Agrahaṇa* itself as *Mūlāvidyā* ; but only after it is substantiated and proved that Shri Śaṅkara has not called *Grahaṇābhāva* (the non-existence of comprehension or non-comprehension) *Agrahaṇa* or only after denoting clearly that apart from that *Grahaṇābhāva* a different *Mūlāvidyā*

has been mentioned or explained by Shri Śaṅkara in such and such context - this intepretation can be accepted and not until then.

What is the Cause for Avidyā ?

Nowhere has the Bhāshyakāra raised the question - “What is the cause for Avidyā ?” The Vivaraṇakāras have stated that for Avidyā of the form or nature of Adhyāsa - ‘Mūlāvidyā’ is the *Upāklāṇakāraṇa* (material cause), is it not ? But this opinion is not to be seen anywhere in the Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas. For the questions - “Why do the common people commit or entertain Adhyāsa ? Why do they (wrongly) reckon Ātman and Anātman each for the other ? - the answers are to be found in the following sentences :

(a) ‘तथाप्यन्योन्यस्मिन्नन्योन्यात्मकतामन्योन्य धर्माश्चाध्यस्येतरेतरा-
विवेकेन अत्यन्तविविक्तयोर्धर्मधर्मिणोर्मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य
अहमिदं ममेदमिति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ॥’ - (Sūtra Bhā.
Adh. Bhā. 1)

Meaning - “Even it being so, the common people by nature do Adhyāsa (misconceive) with regard to Ātman and Anātman by misconceiving one in the other mutually as also misconceiving the *Dharmas* (qualities) of each in the other ; because of the reason that they have not distinguished Dharmas which are extremely different as also the *Dharmis* (the entities endowed with those qualities) from each other - they have mixed up the real with the false and are carrying on their workaday transactions naturally due to wrong knowledge (misconception) in the forms of - ‘I am this ; this is mine.’ -”

It amounts to saying that the inability to distinguish between Ātman and Anātman is itself the cause for Adhyāsa. Because of the reason that this inability to distinguish and discern is verily Avidyā of the nature of *Agrahana* (non-comprehension), it further amounts to saying that the Avidyā of the nature of non-comprehension is responsible for, or the cause for, wrong knowledge (i.e. false knowledge). This very opinion is mentioned in the following sentence :

(b) क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्विषयविषयिणोर्भिन्न स्वभावयोरितरेतरतद्दर्माध्यासलक्षणः संयोगः क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञस्वरूपविवेकाभावनिबन्धनः ॥ - (Gītā. Bhā. 13-26)
 Meaning : “Kshetra and Kshetrajña means Anātman, which is the Vishaya and Ātman, who is the Vishayi (respectively) ; although both these are of different essential natures, having misconceived (Adhyāsa) each for the other and their respective Dharmas mutually in each other is itself their *Samyōga* (union, association) ; for this *Samyōga* the absence or lack of not distinguishing between the *Kshetra-swarūpa* (essential nature of the not-self) and *Kshetra-jñaswarūpa* (essential nature of the Self) is itself the cause.”

In the above-mentioned first sentence, the expression - ‘मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः’ is broken, split into ‘मिथ्या अज्ञाननिमित्तः’ by the Vyākhyānakāras and they have interpreted that Mūlāvidyā alone which is *Anirvachaniya* (indescribable, indefinable) is the *Upādāna* (material cause) for Adhyāsa (Pañch. 4, Vivaraṇā. 11). But because they have not shown as to where exactly this *Anirvachaniya* Mūlāvidyā is mentioned in the Bhāshya, this *Vyākhyāna* (interpretative commentary) cannot be acceptable at all. Besides, in the

Gītā Bhāshya, Avidyā, which is of the nature of Adhyāsa, is itself seen being called 'Mithyājñāna' also. To wit, 'सोऽयमध्यासस्वरूपः क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ संयोगो मिथ्याज्ञानलक्षणः' = (Gītā Bhā. 13-26). This alone is being called 'मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः' (Sūtra Bhā. 1). For that reason too there is no approval for this commentary (mentioned above). It is true that Avidyā which is of the nature of *Agrahaṇa* (non-comprehension) is called "Nimitta", "Hetu", "Kāraṇa", "Bīja" etc. in the Bhāshya ; in such contexts or places the *Mūlāvidyāvādins* (proponents of the theory of Mūlāvidyā) comment that "Bīja" means Avidyā alone which is *Upādāna Kāraṇa* (material cause). But because they have not established the fact as to where, in which context, Shri Śaṅkara has mentioned (unequivocally or stridently) this Mūlāvidyā, this Vyākhyāna too cannot possibly be accepted.

In the Bhāshya, Avidyā of the nature of *Agrahaṇa* is also called *Ajñāna*, *Apratibōdha*, *Anishchaya*, *Anavagama*, *Anavabōdha*, *Tamas* etc. In any case, because of the reason that *Agrahaṇa* and *Anyathāgrahaṇa* have been called Avidyā alone in the Bhāshya, if there is this word 'Avidyā' used in a particular place, then we will have to discern as to what exactly is its meaning according to the circumstances.

(c) एवमयमनादिरनन्तो नैसर्गिकोऽध्यासो मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः ॥ - (Sūtra Bhā. Adh. Bhā. 12).

In this sentence it has been stated that Adhyāsa, of the nature of *Mithyāpratyaya* (false concept, misconception) is *Anādi* (beginningless) and *Ananta* (endless), is it not ? In some people there may arise a doubt of the type - "That which is a *Pratyaya* (concept) - how at all can it be *Anādi*

and Ananta ?” For this the solution is : As long as *Vyavahāra* (empirical transaction) exists, either *Agrahāṇa* or *Anyathāgrahāṇa* as also their *Samskāra* (latent impression) invariably exist. That is all that is meant by this sentence. In this context the fact that this very meaning or interpretation should be reckoned is pointed out by the following sentence :

(d) ‘बीजाङ्कुरवत् अविद्याकृतः संसारः आत्मनि क्रियाकारक फलाध्यारोपलक्षणः अनादिरनन्तोऽनर्थः ॥’ - (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-1-1 ; Sam. 1-7).

The Āshraya (Substratum) for Avidyā, its Viśhaya (Object)

The two questions - ‘To whom is Avidyā ? About which matter or thing is there Avidyā ?’ - in truth, do not at all arise in this Advaita Siddhānta. For, the questions - To whom ? About which matter ? - have to arise in Dvaita. “The whole gamut of Dvaita is *Adhyasta* (superimposed, misconceived), *Āvidyaka* (born out of ignorance) and is not real” - to people who aver like this - those who question in the manner - “To whom is Avidyā ? About which thing there is Avidyā ?” - have not discerned the profound truth or purport of this Siddhānta - This fact becomes very clear and evident. Even so, the statement that - “Due to Avidyā, Dvaita has come into being ; by means of Vidyā, Advaita gets established” - has been literally assumed to be true and many *Avivekins* (non-discriminative people) raise the questions mentioned above. From the viewpoint of such people Shri Śaṅkara has given the following answers :

(1) कस्य पुनरयमप्रबोधः इति चेत् । यस्त्वं पृच्छसि तस्य त इति वदामः । नन्वहमीश्वर एवोक्तः श्रुत्या । यद्येवं प्रतिबुद्धोऽसि, नास्ति कस्यचिदप्रबोधः ॥ - Sūtra Bhā. (4-1-3).

Meaning : “To whom is this *Ajñāna* (ignorance) ? - In answer, ‘To you who is asking the question’, we say. You may object to this saying that - ‘In the Śruti it is stated that I am verily Īshwara, is it not ?’ If you have cognized in that manner, then to no one there is *Ajñāna* whatsoever.”

(ii) ब्रह्मण्यविद्यानुपपत्तिरिति चेत् । न । ब्रह्मणि विद्याविधानात् । न हि शुक्तिकायां रजताध्यारोपणेऽसति शुक्तिकात्वं ज्ञाप्यते चक्षुर्गोचरापन्नायाम् ‘इयं शुक्तिका न रजतम्’ इति । तथा सदेवेदं सर्वम्, ब्रह्मैवेदं सर्वम्, आत्मैवेदं सर्वम्, नेदं द्वैतमस्त्यब्रह्म । इति ब्रह्मण्येकत्वविज्ञानं न विधातव्यं ब्रह्मण्यविद्याध्यारोपणायामसत्याम् । न ब्रूमः शुक्तिकायामिव ब्रह्मण्यतद्धर्माध्यारोपणा नास्तीति । किं तर्हि, न ब्रह्म स्वात्मन्यतद्धर्माध्यारोपणनिमित्तमविद्याकर्तृ चेति । भवत्वेवं नाविद्याकर्तृ भ्रान्तं च ब्रह्म । किं तु नैवाब्रह्म अविद्याकर्ता चेतनो भ्रान्तोऽन्य इष्यते ॥ - (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “In the matter of Brahman, Avidyā cannot exist at all, is it not ? - In answer, it is not proper (to say so). For, Vidyā has been instructed with the purport of cognizing Brahman. If no one misconceives silver in a sea-shell, does anyone denote in the manner - ‘This is a sea-shell alone, not silver ?’ No. In the same manner, if there were no Avidyā with regard to Brahman, then the Śāstra would not have instructed that Brahma is one and

one alone in the manner - 'All this is verily *Sat* (Reality) ; all this is verily Brahman, all this is *Ātman* alone ; there is no *Dvaita* (duality) which is not this Brahman.

'(Objection) : We did not say that - 'Just as the silver is misconceived in the sea-shell, in Brahman that thing which is not its *Dharma* (quality, attribute) is not misconceived' ; we say - 'Brahman is not an *Ajñā* (ignorant one) who is responsible (cause) for super-imposing a *Dharma* which does not belong to It !'

'(Siddhānta) : It may be accepted if it is your opinion that - 'In this manner Brahman is neither *Ajñā* nor associated with *Bhrānti* (delusion)' ; but, especially if you say that - 'Apart from Brahman there exists another *Chetana* (sentient being) who is *Bhrānta* (deluded) - who is *Ajñā* (ignorant)' - then we do not agree'. "

It becomes quite evident from the above-mentioned sentences that all these matters like *Avidyā*, the object for *Avidyā* and the substratum for *Avidyā* are, in truth, conjured up or projected by *Avidyā* itself. If we observe properly (with insight), although it is the absolute truth that there is no *Āshraya* (substratum) whatsoever for *Avidyā*, for the purpose of carrying out *Ātmānātmaviveka* (Intuitive deliberation between *Ātman* and *Anātman*), Shri Śāṅkara has expressed that - "Because it is a *Pratyaya* (mental concept) *Avidyā* is *Antahkaraṇa Dharma* (a quality, attribute of the inner instrument of mind)". This statement should be understood to have been made adopting the viewpoint of deliberation, discrimination of the workaday transactions. For example, look at this sentence :

(iii) अत्राह - एवं तर्हि ज्ञातृधर्मो अविद्या । न । विपरीतादिग्रहणं तन्निमित्तं वा तैमिरिकत्वादिदोषो ग्रहीतुश्चक्षुषः संस्कारेण तिमिरेऽपनीते

ग्रहीतुरदर्शनात् ग्रहीतुर्धर्मो यथा, तथा सर्वत्रैवाग्रहणविपरीतसंशयप्रत्ययाः
सनिमित्ताः करणस्यैव कस्यचिद्भवितुमर्हन्ति, न ज्ञातुः क्षेत्रज्ञस्य ॥ (Gītā
Bhā. 13-2).

Meaning : “(Objection) : ‘In that case, Avidyā becomes the *Dharma* (an attribute) of the cognizer.’ (Consolation) : ‘Not so ; for, just as whether it is wrongly seeing etc. or its cause of cataract etc. - when after a proper treatment (*Samskāra*) is given, that cataract disappears, it is no longer seen to exist in the seer - and hence it is not his *Dharma* - similarly in all aspects the *Pratyayas* (concepts) of not cognizing, doubting and wrongly cognizing as also their causes should invariably become the *Dharma* (attribute) of a particular *Karāṇa* (instrument or means of action or sense organ) and not the *Dharma* of the *Kshetrājña* (one who knows or cognizes the *Kshetra* or the dwelling place).’ -”

There is no approval whatsoever of Shri Śaṅkara to the theory that - “Whether it is *Adhyāsa* (misconception) or *Mūlāvidyā* - they have reposed or rested in *Ātman* alone.” However, the proponents of *Mūlāvidyā Vāda* say that - “*Mūlāvidyā* has rested on *Chinmāra* (Absolute Pure Consciousness) ; further, it has objectified that Pure Consciousness Itself.”

What is the *Kārya* (Function, Effect) of *Avidyā* ?

To the question - “The *Bandha* (bondage) which is the product or effect of *Avidyā* - which is it ?” - the answer is to be found in the following sentence :

(i) अतः इदमविद्यायाः सतत्त्वमुक्तं भवति । सर्वात्मानं सन्तमसर्वात्मत्वेन
ग्राहयति । आत्मनोऽन्यद्वस्त्वन्तरमविद्यमानं प्रत्युपस्थापयति । आत्मान-

मसर्वमापादयति । ततस्तद्विषयः कामो भवति यतो भिद्यते । कामतः क्रियामुपादत्ते । ततः फलम् ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 4-3-20).

Meaning : “Therefore, it amounts to saying that this alone is the essential reality of Avidyā. It depicts Ātman who is *Sarvātman* (the Self of everything) to be *Asarvātman* (not the Self of all) ; although there does not exist any entity or object apart from Ātman, it conjures up or projects as if the former exists ; it (i.e. Avidyā) makes Ātman to be reckoned as *Parichhinna* (divisible, partible) ; thereafter, that object which is apart from oneself, with regard to that object a desire accrues ; due to this desire one performs action ; thereafter the fruit of it accrues.”

It evolves from this that - “Desire, which makes one blind to what is before him and project *Kriyākārahaphala Bheda* (the distinctions of action, means of action and its fruit), is itself the effect of Avidyā.”

(ii) नैसर्गिकोऽध्यासो मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. Adh. Bhā. 12).

Meaning : “Adhyāsa, which is natural, is of the form of *Mithyāpratya* (false notion or concept) ; it creates agentship of action and enjoyership. This is perceptible, visible to all the people.”

‘Kriyākārahaphalabheda’ and ‘Kartṛtwa Bhōktṛtwa’ - both mean the same thing. This alone is the *Kārya* (function) of Avidyā.

(iii) सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्यात्मभूत इवाविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः, प्रकृतिः इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलष्येते ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-14).

Meaning - “As if they are verily the essential nature of *Īśwara* (the Lord Creator) who is omniscient, the names and forms which are projected or conjured up (*Kalpita*) due to *Avidyā* (ignorance) cannot possibly be described, defined either as He alone or not Himself ; these (i.e. names and forms) are the seed for the *Samsāra Prapañcha* (world of duality of the transmigratory life). They have been called in the scriptures and sages’ works (by various names like) Omniscient Lord’s (*Īśwara*’s) *Māyā*, *Shakti*, *Prakṛiti*.”

Just as *Samsāra* (transmigratory life or existence) is being called *Avidyā-Kāma-Karma*, *Karṣṇatva-Bhōkṛtva*, *Kriyā-Kāraka-Phala* - there is also a conventional practice of calling it *Nāmarūpa*. Because of the reason that names and forms are false appearances conjured up due to *Avidyā*, they are also being called ‘*Māyā*’. Because of the reason that *Māyā* is the false appearance brought about as an effect (*Kārya*) of *Avidyā*, it is being described as ‘*Avidyā Lakṣhaṇa*’, ‘*Avidyā Kṛita*’, ‘*Avidyā Kalpita*’, ‘*Avidyātmaka*’, ‘*Avidyāpratyupasthāpita*’ also. Without knowing this secret some (post-Śaṅkara) commentators have confused themselves to believe ‘*Māyā*’ itself is ‘*Avidyā*’ ; besides, they are affirming that *Prakṛiti* (primordial matter) which is itself *Avidyā-Kalpita* (misconceived due to *Avidyā*) is the cause for *Avidyā* as also that very *Prakṛiti* is ‘*Mūlāvidyā*’ (root cause for *Avidyā*). It has to be necessarily brought to the attention of such misguided commentators as to what Shri Śaṅkara has himself reiterated, very clearly too (viz. “*Māyā* is *Avidyā Kalpita*.”)

The statement made here that - “*Nāmarūpa Māyā* is *Anirvachanīya*” - is meant only to denote that although it appears in *Vyavahāra* (workaday, empirical transactions)

it is not existing as *Paramārtha* (Absolute Reality) and not to indicate that a totally different kind of substance or entity called '*Anirvac'aniya*' (indefinable, indescribable thing) really exists. To substantiate this tenet the following sentence is authoritative :

(iv) यदा तु परमार्थदृष्ट्या परमात्मतत्त्वाच्छ्रुत्यनुसारिभिरन्यत्वेन निरूप्यमाणे नामरूपे मृदादिविकारवद्वस्त्वन्तरे तत्त्वतो न स्तः, सलिलफेन घटादिविकारवदेव तदा तदपेक्ष्य 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्', 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' इत्यादिपरमार्थदर्शन गोचरत्वं प्रतिपद्यते । यदा तु स्वाभाविक्या अविद्यया ब्रह्मस्वरूपं रज्जुशुक्तिकागगनस्वरूपवदेव स्वेन रूपेण वर्तमानं केनचिदस्पृष्टस्वभावमपि सन्नामरूपकृतकार्यकरणोपाधिभ्यो विवेकेन नावधार्यते, नामरूपोपाधिदृष्टिरेव च भवति स्वाभाविकी, तदा सर्वोऽयं वस्त्वन्तरास्तित्व व्यवहारः ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 3-5-1).

Meaning : "When we follow the *Śruti* (scripture) and observe from the *Paramārtha Dṛshṭi* (Transcendental viewpoint) - just as apart from the clay the pot etc. which are its *Kārya* (effects), apart from water the foam etc. do not exist at all - apart from *Paramātmān* (Supreme Self) the names and forms become sublated, falsified - then He becomes the object of *Paramārtha Darshana* (Intuitive vision or experience of the Ultimate, Absolute Reality) of the type of - 'One alone without a second' ; 'In this Ātman there does not exist any *Dvaita* (duality) whatsoever.' But when due to the natural *Avidyā* - just like the rope, the sea-shell, empty space etc. - Brahman, which (always, eternally) exists in Its own essential nature of Pure Being though devoid of any taint or touch of anything else whatsoever, is not cognized to be different from the body

and the senses which are projected due to names and forms, and further the natural viewpoint of the adjuncts of names and forms persists - then all this empirical transaction of a separate entity existing ensues.”

III. Deliberation on Vidyā (Self-Knowledge)

So far we have described in detail the *Svarūpa* (essential nature) of *Avidyā* (ignorance), its *Hetu* (cause), its *Āshraya* (substratum), its *Vishaya* (object, subject-matter), its *Kārya* (resultant effect), as also the essential nature of *Bandha* (bondage) that ensues due to *Avidyā*. Now, after describing the essential nature etc. of *Vidyā* (Self-Knowledge) we have to indicate the resultant effect or fruit of *Mukti* (Beatitude, Liberation) accruing from It.

The Essential Nature of Vidyā

The following two sentences indicate that to determine the essential nature of Ātman is verily called *Vidyā* and just as *Avidyā* is of the nature of *Aviveka* (non-discrimination) *Vidyā* is of the nature of *Viveka* (discrimination).

(a) तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणं विद्याम् आहुः ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. Adh. Bhā. 5).

In the previous sentence, it has been stated that - “*Puṇḍītas* (wise men) call *Adhyāsa* (misconception) *Avidyā*”. There are instances of some among the present-day proponents of *Mūlāvidyā* theory trying to evade the issue by saying - “This is the opinion of scholars but not of Shri Śaṅkara” ! But because of the reason that this sentence - “To determine the *Svarūpa* (essential nature) of a *Vastu* (an entity, i.e. Brahman, the Ultimate Reality) is called

Vidyā'' - comes close on the heels of that earlier sentence, it will amount to saying that - "In the viewpoint of the Mūlāvidyāvādins this too is the opinion of the scholars but not of Shri Śaṅkara" ! In that event, it will amount to saying that Shri Śaṅkara never taught in his Adhyāsa Bhāshya the essential natures of Vidyā and Avidyā and thereby that (famous) Bhāshya is rendered futile. This is an undesirable result of an attempt to distort the meaning of a sentence which is very clear in its import or significance !

(b) दूरं दूरेण, महतान्तरेण, एते विपरीते अन्योन्यव्यावृत्तरूपे विवेकाविवेकात्मकत्वात्तमःप्रकाशाविव ॥ (Kāṭha Bhā. 1-2-4).

Vidyā has been called by synonymous terms like 'Ātma Buddhi', 'Brahmātma Buddhi', 'Ātmapratyaya', 'Ātmajñāna' etc. and the word 'Jñāna' has been called by synonyms like 'Avagati', 'Avagama', 'Viveka', 'Avabōdha', 'Samyajjñāna', 'Avadhāraṇa', 'Nishchaya' etc. As the present-day Vedāntins aver, to prove their doctrine of - "Jñāna is different ; Sākshātkāra is different" - there is no support whatsoever to be found in Shri Śaṅkara's extant Bhāshyas ; to cognize (Intuit) Brahman as our Ātman is itself Jñāna, Vidyā.

The Means to Attain Vidyā

How does Brahmajñāna accrue ? To this question Shri Śaṅkara has written an answer in his Bhāshyas as : (i) *Yajña* (sacrifice) - *Dāna* (charity) - *Tapas* (austerity) ; (ii) *Shama* (control over the mind) etc. ; (iii) staying near a *Guru* (spiritual preceptor), practise disciplines like *Śravaṇa* (listening to the scriptural tenets) etc. - by these three types of

spiritual practices Jñāna accrues. Further he has stressed that by means of Yajña etc. a desire to acquire Jñāna is born (created) in a *Sādhaka* (practitioner) and by means of Shama etc. Jñāna Itself will accrue ; since Vidyā is a thing caused by or accruing from a *Pramāṇa* (valid means), above all or superior to all others, the third category of Śravaṇa, Manana etc. are the *Antarāṅga Sādhana*s (internal or introspective spiritual practices). Since there is no dissent or difference of opinion in this matter, quoting two sentences from the Bhāshyas we will conclude the deliberation :

(i) तत्राप्येवंविदिति विद्यासंयोगात्प्रत्यासन्नानि विद्यासाधनानि शमादीनि । विविदिषा संयोगात्तु बाह्यतराणि यज्ञादीनि ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 3-4-27).

(ii) यज्ञादीन्यपि श्रवणादिद्वारेणैव विद्यां जनयन्ति । प्रमाणजन्यत्वा-
द्विद्यायाः ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 3-4-51).

To say that *Ātmajñāna* (Self-Knowledge) is caused or born afresh also is not proper ; if *Anātmajñāna* (knowledge of the not-Self) is removed or sublated, it amounts to or is tantamount to 'Jñāna' accruing alone.

(iii) न हि आत्मानाम कस्यचित् कदाचिदप्रसिद्धः । तस्माज्ज्वाने यत्नो न कर्तव्यः, किं त्वनात्मनि आत्मबुद्धिनिवृत्तावेव ॥ (Gītā Bhā. 18-50).

The Substratum and Object or Subject-matter for Vidyā

Those deliberations which were previously carried out with regard to Avidyā's Āśraya and Vishaya have to be remembered, recalled here too. If we observe deeply and properly, in Shri Śaṅkara's *Siddhānta* (spiritual teachings)

the question that - “To whom is Avidyā or Vidyā ?” - does not arise at all. Even so, assuming, presuming the distinctions and divisions of our *Vyāvahārika* (empirical, workaday) transactions, there is a practice of answering the question in the following manner :

(a) ब्रह्मणि साधकत्वकल्पना अस्मदादिष्विवापेशला तदात्मानमेवावेत् तस्मात् तत् सर्वमभवत् - इति चेत् । न । शास्त्रोपालम्भात् । न ह्यस्मत्कल्पनेयं शास्त्रकृता तु । तस्माच्छास्त्रस्यायमुपालम्भः । सर्वो हि लोकव्यवहारे ब्रह्मण्येव कल्पितः, न परमार्थसन् इति अत्यल्पमिदमुच्यते इयमेव कल्पना अपेशलेति ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “Anyone may ask : ‘Brahman too, like us, is a *Sādhaka* (practitioner) and It cognizes Its own Swarūpa and attains *Sarvātmata* (everything being the Self alone)’ - to imagine like this is not good, is it not ? But this amounts to a defect being hoisted on or levelled against the Śāstra ; for, this *Kalpāna* (imagination or conception) has not been made, formulated afresh by us ; the Śāstra itself has made it.....The whole gamut of *Lōkavyavahāra* (empirical transactions) is imagined (Kalpita) in Brahman alone ; none of it is *Paramārtha* (absolutely real) ; it being so, what is the cause for raising this objection that this one singular imagination is not good or proper ?”

The statement to the effect : “Brahman being a *Sādhaka*, by virtue of Vidyā It gets rid of Avidyā” - is *Vyāvahārika* (said from the empirical viewpoint) alone ; in the *Paramārtha* (absolute) sense one should not discern that Brahman is of this *Swabhāva* (essential nature) - this alone is the prime purport of the above sentence. Just as

if we merely imagine the sky to be of blue colour, in reality it does not amount to its being blue, similarly merely by this imagination alone Brahman does not get tainted by any defect whatsoever ; thus we should discern this truth. This is an imagination referred to from the view-point of the common people,

(b) ब्रह्मण्यविद्यानुपपत्तिरिति चेत् । न । ब्रह्मणि विद्याविधानात् ॥

(Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

The purport of this sentence is : “There is no reason whatsoever for Avidyā to exist with regard to Brahman, is it not ? - if this question is asked, the answer is : Not so ; because of the reason alone that in the Śāstra it has been pointedly instructed that one should cognize Brahman, we can determine that there exists an Avidyā of the nature of not cognizing Brahman.” This sentence has been given in full previously itself. From this it becomes evident that - “Avidyā means *Adhyāsa* (misconception) ; Vidyā means having cognized the real essential nature of an entity or substance alone and nothing else.”

(c) विद्याविद्ययोस्तद्धर्मत्वमिति चेत् । न । प्रत्यक्षत्वात्, विवेकाविवेकौ रूपादिवत् प्रत्यक्षावुपलभ्येते अन्तःकरणस्थौ । न हि रूपस्य प्रत्यक्षस्य सतो द्रष्टृधर्मत्वम् । अविद्या च स्वानुभवेन रूप्यते । ‘मूढोऽहमविविक्तं मम विज्ञानमिति’ । तथा विद्याविवेकोऽनुभूयते । उपदिशन्ति चान्येभ्य आत्मनो विद्यां बुधाः । तथा च अन्येऽवधारयन्ति । तस्मान्नामरूप पक्षस्यैव विद्याविद्ये । नामरूपे च नात्मधर्मौ ॥ (Tai. Bhā. 2-8).

Meaning : “Are these Vidyā and Avidyā *Dharmas* (i.e. qualities, attributes) of Ātman or not ? The answer

is : No. For, they are *Pratyaksha* (perceptible). To wit, just like *Rūpa* (form) etc. - *Viveka* (discrimination) and *Aviveka* (non-discrimination) also being or existing in the *Antahkarana* (Mind) are being actually perceived. *Rūpa* (form) which is perceptible is not the *Dharma* (attribute) of the seer or perceiver, is it not ? (In the present context too) Avidyā in the form of “I am an ignorant person ; my understanding is not capable of distinguishing or of a discriminating type” - is an object for our *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience). In the same way, the *Viveka* (discrimination) going by the name of ‘Vidyā’ is an object for our Intuitive experience indeed. Those who know are invariably communicating to others their own knowledge ; those others too are verily understanding it. Therefore, Vidyā and Avidyā are in line with names and forms (in this respect). But names and forms not being the *Dharma* of Ātman is a fact already known indeed.”

In this sentence too, it is very clear that both Vidyā and Avidyā - meaning, cognizing or knowing an object or not cognizing or knowing it - are the *Antahkarana Dharmas* (the qualities, attributes of the Mind). In many places in his Bhāshyas, Shri Śaṅkara has called both Vidyā and Avidyā ‘*Vṛitti*’ (thought), ‘*Pratyaya*’ (concept). His calling Mūlāvidyā as Avidyā is not to be seen even in one single place anywhere.

In the same manner, as it was mentioned in the previous chapter that - “Avidyā is an *Antahkarana Dharma*” - here too, following the *Sāṅkhya Dṛishṭi* (the view-point of the Intuitive deliberation or discrimination) it has been stated that - “Vidyā is *Antahkarana Dharma*”. If we observe with insight, *Antahkarana* (Mind), its *Dharma*

(attribute), its *Vishaya* (object) - all are *Adhyasta* (super-imposed or misconceived) and hence, in the ultimate sense, *Adhyāsa* is not the attribute or quality of anything at all - This truth should be remembered here.

What is the Resultant Effect of Vidyā ?

Just as *Avidyā* is the cause for *Bandha* (bondage), *Vidyā* is the cause for *Mōksha* (liberation). As to how *Vidyā* gives rise to *Mōksha* can be known from the following sentences :

(i) अनुभवावसानं च ब्रह्मविज्ञानमविद्याया निवर्तकं मोक्षसाधनं च दृष्टफलतयेष्यते ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-4).

Meaning : Culminating in one's *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) alone, *Brahmavidyā* sublates, falsifies *Avidyā*. It also, at the same time, serves as a *Sādhana* (practical means) for *Mōksha* ; Its fruit, it is acknowledged, accrues here alone."

In this sentence, the removal or sublation of *Avidyā* is not based merely on *Śāstra Pramāṇa* (valid source of the scriptures) ; the fact of *Mōksha* accruing is not an occurrence somewhere and at some particular time ; in this very life-span It appears to the *Jijñāsu's* (seeker's) *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) - this purport is implicit here.

(ii) तस्मादज्ञानाध्यारोपणनिवृत्तिरेवात्मानमेवावेदित्युक्तम्, नात्मनो विषयीकरणम् ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : "Therefore, it has been stated that the removal or sublation of *Adhyāsa* (misconception) caused by *Ajñāna* is itself said to be - 'It cognized *Ātman*' - and not making *Ātman* (Self, Pure Consciousness) an object

for *Jñāna* (Knowledge - i.e. intellectual comprehension)."

To say - "Removing, sublating *Avidyā*" and "Removing, sublating *Adhyāsa*" - both mean one and the same. Because of the reason that *Ātmajñāna* (Self-Knowledge, Intuitive experience, Pure Consciousness) is *Nitya Siddha* (eternally or perennially established or existing) there is no need for attaining or acquiring That afresh. If *Adhyāsa* is sublating or removed, then it means (amounts to) acquisition or attainment of *Jñāna* alone - these two aspects are implicit in this sentence. The second aspect has already been explained (page no. 47) with an illustration of *Gītā Bhāshya* (18-50).

(iii) क्रियाकारकफलभेदबुद्धिरविद्या आत्मनि नित्य प्रवृत्ता । 'मम कर्म, अहं कर्ता, अमुष्मै फलायेदं कर्म करिष्यामि' इतीयमविद्या अनादि कालप्रवृत्ता । 'अस्या अविद्यायाः निवर्तकम् 'अयमहमस्मि केवलोऽकर्ता अक्रियोऽफलो न मत्तोऽन्योऽस्ति कश्चित्' इत्येवंरूपमात्मविषयं ज्ञान-मुत्पद्यमानम् । कर्मप्रवृत्तिहेतुभूतायाः भेदबुद्धेर्निवर्तकत्वात् ॥ (*Gītā Bhā.* 18-66).

Meaning : "Avidyā of the form of a reckoning that *Kriyā*, *Kāraka* and *Phala* are different is always existing in *Ātman* ; the Avidyā of the type of - 'I have a Karma, I am a *Kartṛu* (agent of action), I am doing Karma for such and such a fruit' - has continued to function from time immemorial. In order that such an Avidyā is got rid of a Knowledge with regard to *Ātman* of the type - 'Look here, this 'I' is *Kevala* (Absolute, non-dual), not a *Kartṛu* and is devoid of *Kriyā* and *Phala* ; apart from me there is nothing else existing' - should accrue ; for, it removes the *Bheda Buddhi* (notion or sense of differentiation) which

is responsible for prompting or inducing one into Karma.”

In this statement it has been very clearly declared that there is no Avidyā whatsoever, apart from the notion that Kriyā-Kāraka-Phala distinctions are real, as also that apart from the cognition of the type - “I am myself that Ātman alone who is non-dual and who is of the essential nature of being devoid of Kriyā-Kāraka-Phala distinctions”-there is no other Vidyā whatsoever.

(iv) यदि ज्ञानाभावो, यदि संशयज्ञानं, यदि विपरीतज्ञानं वोच्यते, अज्ञानमिति, सर्वं हि तज्ज्ञानेनैव निवर्त्यते ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 3-3-1).

Meaning : “Whatever meaning among the three categories of *Jñāna Abhāva* (non-comprehension of the Reality), *Samshaya* (doubt), *Viparīta Jñāna* (false knowledge) is adduced to the word ‘Ajñāna’ - all that is sublated by *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge) alone.”

In this sentence for the expression ‘Ajñāna’ or ‘Avidyā’ it has been stipulated only these three meanings by counting or enumerating them ; it is crystal clear that among them ‘Mūlāvidyā’ is not included. We should remember what Shri Śaṅkara has stressed here that Jñāna removes these three only.

(v) नहि क्वचित्साक्षाद्वस्तुधर्मस्यापोद्री दृष्टा कर्त्री वा विद्या । अविद्यायास्तु सर्वत्रैव निवर्तिका दृश्यते । तथेहाप्यब्रह्मत्वमसर्वत्वं चाविद्याकृतमेव निवर्त्यतां ब्रह्मविद्यया । न तु पारमार्थिकं वस्तु कर्तुं निवर्तयितुं वार्हति ब्रह्मविद्या ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “Vidyā removing or sublating actually or perceptibly what is an entity’s *Dharma* (attribute) or creating it afresh is not seen at all ; but it (Vidyā) removing

Avidyā is seen everywhere. In the same way, here too *Abrahmatwa* (non-Reality), *Asarvatwa* (not being everything) which are caused by Avidyā alone - if they are said to be removed or sublated by Brahmanavidyā, it is quite reasonable. But quite contrary to that, to say that Brahmanavidyā creates a real entity, substance or removes such an entity will not be proper.”

The purport implicit in this statement is : If one has wrongly reckoned or misconceived a sea-shell to be silver, as soon as the correct knowledge of the type - ‘This is a sea-shell’ - accrues, that wrong knowledge disappears. Similar to this illustration, here too Brahma Vidyā should invariably remove, falsify the wrong knowledge of the type - ‘I am a *Samsāri* (transmigratory soul)’. It is not, however, an instrument or agent which falsifies a really existing substance ; nor is It one which brings into existence something non-existent. For this Bhāshya portion the Mūlāvidyā theory is extremely opposed. For, the Avidyā that these proponents of this new-found theory refer to is not *Ajñāna* (non-comprehension) which in our workaday world gets sublated, falsified by means of correct knowledge ; this Mūlāvidyā (of theirs) is something totally different from the commonly known three categories of *Ajñāna*, *Samshaya* and *Viparītajñāna* which are all falsified by *Jñāna* in our empirical dealings. Besides, there is no illustration or example whatsoever for them to prove their proposition - “Vidyā has the power to remove such a Mūlāvidyā.” Some among these disputants champion the cause of this frivolous and fanciful theory alone by applying it to the illustration of the sea-shell-silver, saying that the silver of the sea-shell is the effect of an *Avasthārūpa*

(a modified state) called 'Tūlāvidyā' of *Anirvachanīya* (indescribable) 'Mūlāvidyā'. But all these disputants have not accepted the truth that - 'By means of the correct knowledge that it is a sea-shell this Tūlāvidyā disappears.' To assert that - "Avidyā - like a *Dravya* (substance) - acquires or undergoes different states or mutations" - is not in keeping with reason. In our workaday world no one - whosoever he may be - has the experience of this Tūlāvidyā, or its removal ; besides, to say that the *Bhāṣhyakāra* (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) had acknowledged this Tūlāvidyā, there is not even an iota of evidence or support. Therefore, it is very clear that not only is this theory opposed to Shri Śaṅkara's philosophy but also contradictory to universal experience.

Apart from Vedānta Vākya Jñāna (Knowledge Engendered by the Upanishadic Sentences) is There Anything Else Necessary for Mōksha ?

Some present-day Vedāntins affirm that - "In addition to discerning the meaning of the Vedānta Vākya one should necessarily and separately attain *Sākshāṅkāra* (materialisation or actualisation)." It is quite but natural that because of the reasons : (i) That one is not having the proper, conducive qualifications or capabilities needed for *Vedānta Vichāra* (discrimination or Intuitive deliberation needed for knowing the Upanishadic teachings) ; (ii) deliberation as delineated and described by both the preceptor and the Śāstra using a traditional methodology - one has not been able to comprehend the purport implicit in the sentence. But, to believe either that even by means of Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyāsana which a *Jijñāsu* (genuine seeker)

who is fully qualified has practised in the proper method the Jñāna from the Vedānta Vākya does not accrue ; or even after such Jñāna accrues yet another event of 'Sākshātkāra' should necessarily occur - is totally opposed to the Bhāshyakāra's teaching or philosophy. In support of this conclusion we will quote some important Bhāshya sentences :

(a) यथा विधिविषये कर्त्राद्यनेककारकोपसंहारद्वारेण वाक्यार्थज्ञान-
कालादन्यत्रानुष्ठेयोऽर्थोऽस्त्यग्निहोत्रादिलक्षणः न तथेह परविद्याविषये,
वाक्यार्थज्ञानसमकाले एव तु पर्यवसितो भवति ॥ Muṇ. Bhā.(1-1-6).

Meaning : “Just as in a sentence which stipulates as an injunction Karma, even after the meaning of the sentence is understood, the (Karmas like) *Agnihōtra* (sacrificial fire) etc. which are to be performed by gathering many *Kāraṅgas* (instruments or means of action) like *Kartṛu* (agent of action) etc. remains, the deliberation on the Vedānta Vākya which teaches or describes this *Paramātmavidyā* (Intuitive Knowledge of the Supreme Self) is not like that at all ; at the very instant (simultaneously, as it were) of our discerning or divining the Vākyaṛtha, the whole process gets completed.”

Here it has been clearly stated that after cognizing the meaning of the sentence there does not remain anything whatsoever to be done. It amounts to saying that the doctrine of Shri Vāchaspati Miśra (Bhāmatikāra) etc. who opine that - “Even after discerning the Vākyaṛtha some such spiritual practice like *Dhyāna* (meditation) or *Jñānābhyāsa* (repeated practice of that knowledge) should be performed” - is opposed to this teaching of Shri Śaṅkara.

(b) विद्योत्पत्तावविद्याया ह्यस्तत्वात्तदाश्रयेऽविद्यानुपपत्तेः । न ह्यग्निरुष्णः प्रकाशश्चेति विज्ञाननोत्पत्तौ यस्मिन्नाश्रये तदुत्पन्नं, तस्मिन्नेवाश्रये “शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वा” इत्यविद्याया उत्पत्तिः ॥ नापि संशयोऽज्ञानं वा ॥ (Īśa Bhā. 18).

Meaning : “Because of the reason that after Vidyā accrues Avidyā has disappeared, in that very supporting entity (Āshraya) - (meaning, to that very Jīva) - this Avidyā cannot exist. Even after the cognition that fire is hot and it illumines - to that person who got that cognition - to such a person the false knowledge to the effect - ‘Fire is cold or it does not illumine’ - can never occur ; further, either *Samshaya* (doubt) about it or its non-comprehension can never occur.”

In this statement not only the three meanings of Avidyā are enumerated but also the intended purport is quite clear (of the Bhāshyakāra) so as not to give any scope whatsoever for the fanciful theory of ‘*Avidyāśeṣa*’ (remnant of ignorance) propounded to the effect - ‘Along with Vidyā a bit of Avidyā remains’. It need not be gainsaid that - ‘For a Jñāni too a little of Ajñāna remains is a tenet opposed both to *Yukti* (logic, reason) and *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience).

(c) (i) अन्त्य एवात्मप्रत्ययोऽविद्यानिवर्तको न तु पूर्व इति । न । प्रथमेनानैकान्तिकत्वात् । यदि हि प्रथम आत्मविषयः प्रत्ययोऽविद्यां न निवर्तयति तथान्त्योऽपि तुल्यविषयत्वात् ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “If it is said that - ‘That Ātmajñāna alone which accrues for the last time removes Avidyā and not the first one’ - then it is not proper. For, in the first one itself the rule of law is vitiated. If the first Jñāna pertaining

to the subject-matter of Ātman has not removed Avidyā, the last one too cannot do so. For, to both of them one and the same Ātman is the subject-matter.”

(c) (ii) एवं तर्हि सन्ततोऽविद्यानिवर्तको न विच्छिन्नः इति । न । जीवनादौ सति सन्तत्यनुपपत्तेः । न हि जीवनादिहेतुके प्रत्यये सति विद्याप्रत्ययसन्ततिरुपपद्यते । विरोधात् । अथ जीवनादिप्रत्ययतिरस्करणेनैव आमरणान्ताद्विद्यासन्ततिरिति चेन्न । प्रत्ययेयत्तासंतानानवधारणात् शास्त्रार्थानवधारणदोषात् ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “If it is said that - ‘In that case, incessantly or uninterruptedly repeated Jñāna alone removes Avidyā and not if one contemplates intermittently’ - that too is not proper. For, if one has to be alive, to repeat practising Jñāna without let is not possible. When thinking about matters concerned with efforts to keep alive etc. invariably exist, the continuous repetition of Jñāna is not possible to be carried out ; for, both those thoughts are opposed to each other. Even to aver that - ‘Giving up thoughts of keeping alive etc. till one dies, one has *per force* to pour out Jñāna alone with a measure’ - also is not proper. For, the question as to how many times one has to think or contemplate remains undecided ; besides, the defect of not having determined the Śāstrārtha also devolves on one-self.”

(c) (iii). निरोधस्तर्ह्यर्थान्तरमिति चेत् । अथापि स्याच्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधस्य वेदवाक्यजनितात्मविज्ञानादर्थान्तरत्वात्, तन्त्रान्तरेषु च कर्तव्यतया अवगतत्वाद्विधेयत्वम् इति चेत् । न । मोक्षसाधनत्वेनानवगम्यात् । न हि वेदान्तेषु ब्रह्मात्मविज्ञानादन्यत् परमपुरुषार्थसाधनत्वेनावगम्यते ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-7).

Meaning : “If it is said : ‘In that case, let *Nirōdha* (suppression) itself be one’s yet another duty, responsibility ; because of the reasons that quite different from *Ātmajñāna*, which accrues from Vedavākya, is *Chittavṛttinirōdha* (suppression of mental concepts) and that in other Śāstras like Yōga etc. it is stipulated that it (i.e. *Chittavṛttinirōdha*) should be performed, let us say that such a practice alone has been stipulated here’ - that is also not proper. For, the truth that it is a *Mōkshasādhana* (spiritual practice for attaining Mōksha or liberation) is not determined. In the Upanishads, apart from cognizing *Brahmātmabhāva* (Intuitive experience of Brahman being one’s own Ātman or Self) nothing else has been mentioned as a *Sādhana* (spiritual means) for *Paramapurushārtha* (prime purport of human life).”

The purport of these three above sentences is quite clear indeed. The three different kinds of theories viz. by means of *Charamavṛtti* (sensory perception or feeling) *Sākshātkāra* (actualization, materialisation) occurs ; even a Jñāni should uninterruptedly practise Vidyā ; by *Chittavṛttinirōdha* (suppression of mental thoughts) one should get into *Samādhi* (trance) have been refuted here and proclaimed in unequivocal terms that by means of Vedānta Vākya Jñāna alone the Paramapurushārtha accrues. “Even after the Vākya Jñāna has accrued the practice of Jñāna is necessary” - to this doctrine of the proponents of Mūlāvidyā the above Bhāshya portions are totally opposed.

When Does Mōksha Accrue ?

Although there is no need whatsoever of raising this question, some present-day Vedāntins have raised a doubt

in this regard too. Some among them have stated that as soon as Jñāna accrues the body falls off ; some others have opined that although the Jñāni lives for some time after he has become *Jīvanmukta* (a Realized Soul), because of the reason that for him also *Avidyāśeṣa* (a remnant of Avidyā) remains attached itself till the body falls off - in the real sense he has not attained Mōksha ; *Videhamukti* (liberation after death) alone is the real, genuine *Mukti* (liberation). In this regard we have already exemplified several Bhāshya sentences which refute Ajñānaśeṣa - i.e. Avidyāśeṣa. We will exemplify here those Bhāshya sentences which pertain to *Jīvanmukti* (liberation while we are in this body here and now) :

(i) 'यथा लोके द्रष्टुश्चक्षुष आलोकेन संयोगो यत्कालस्तत्काल एव रूपाभिव्यक्तिः । एवमात्मविषयं विज्ञानं यत्कालं, तत्काल एव तद्विषयाज्ञानतिरोभावः स्यात् ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : "In our workaday world, just as when the relationship or contact of the light ensues with the eyes of the seer, at that very moment itself the form (of the object) appears (i.e. cognized) ; in the same way when the Jñāna with regard to Ātman accrues, at that very moment, instantaneously that Ajñāna pertaining to that Ātman vanishes indeed."

It amounts to saying here very clearly that simultaneously with the attainment of *Jñāna* (Intuition), one gets freed from Ajñāna ; this truth is brought out very clearly here.

(ii) नान्धाज्ञानव्यतिरेकेण मोक्षस्य व्यवधानान्तरं कल्पयितुं शक्यम् । नित्यत्वान्मोक्षस्य, साधक स्वरूपाव्यतिरेकाच्च ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 3-3-1).

Meaning : “Barring Ajñāna, it is not possible to imagine any other hindrance or impediment whatsoever existing for Mōksha ; for, Mōksha is *Nitya* (eternal) and is not existing apart from the essential nature of Pure Being of the *Sādhaka* (practitioner) to boot.”

As soon as Ajñāna disappears (or is sublated) Mōksha should *per force* accrue ; for, Mōksha is not caused afresh ; nor is it something to be attained or acquired afresh. It is in truth our Swarūpa (very essential nature of Pure Being). Therefore, the theory or doctrine of the proponents of Videhamukti that - “Mōksha accrues in some other place or at some other moment of time” - cannot be acceptable at all.

(iii) तस्मात्सर्वं ब्रह्म परामृतं - परममृतमहमेवेति यो वेद निहितं स्थितं गुहायां हृदि सर्वप्राणिनाम्, स एवं विज्ञानादविद्याग्रन्थि - ग्रन्थिमिव दृढीभूतामविद्यावासनां विकिरति-विक्षिपति, विनाशयति, इहजीवन्नेव न मृतः सन् ॥ (Muṇḍaka Bhā. 2-1-10).

Meaning : “Therefore, everything is verily the supreme immortal Brahman ; one who cognizes that Brahman which exists in the cave of the heart of all creatures in the manner - “That is verily myself” - he by virtue of this Intuitive Knowledge destroys that knot of Avidyā - to wit, the latent or potential propensities, impressions of Avidyā which are tightly binding like a knot here itself, i.e. while he is alive ; and not after he dies.” This sentence describes beyond doubt Jīvanmukti.

(iv) यो हि सुषुप्तावस्थामिव निर्विशेषमद्वैतमलुप्तचिद्रूप ज्योतिः स्वभावमात्मानं पश्यति, तस्यैवाकामयमानस्य कर्माभावेगमनकारणाभावात् प्राणा वागादयो नोत्क्रामन्ति । किं तु विद्वान् स इहैव ब्रह्म - यद्यपि देहवानिव

लक्ष्यते स ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति । यस्मान्न हि तस्य - अब्रह्मत्व परिच्छेदहेतवः
 कामाः सन्ति, तस्मादिहैव ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति न शरीर पातोत्तरकालम् ।
 न हि विदुषो मृतस्य भावान्तरापत्तिर्जीवतोऽन्यो भावः । देहान्तरप्रति-
 सन्धानाभावमात्रेणैव तु ब्रह्माप्येतीत्युच्यते ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 4-4-6).

Meaning : “One who, as in the deep sleep state, witnesses (cognizes) Ātman who is devoid of any special attributes, who is non-dual and who is of the essential nature of *Jyōti* (Light) - which is indestructible and *Chidrūpa* (of the nature of Pure Consciousness) - because of the reason that to such a person alone there are no desires and thereby when there is no Karma too, there is no cause for his going anywhere ; hence the vital forces in the form of the senses like speech etc. do not leave him and depart. Besides, though that Jñāni appears to be an embodied being, he being *Brahman* (Absolute Reality) alone merges in Brahman. Because of the reason that there do not exist any *Kāmas* (desires) whatsoever which bring about distinctions of the form of *Abrahmatwa* (not being Brahman), he being verily Brahman here itself merges in Brahman and not after the fall of the physical body. For a Jñāni there can never be two natures - one after his death, the other while alive. Even so, because of the one exclusive reason alone that there is no possibility whatsoever of imagining the acquisition of another body for him, it has been stated that he merges in Brahman.”

In the above sentence the fact that the concept of *Videhamukti* is merely a name-sake expression is clearly brought out, and it is evident that it will loom large before all the readers.

Is It Possible for Ordinary People Like Us of the Present Times to Attain the Fruit of Brahmanvidyā ?

There are instances of some doubting Thomases to create a fear, an awe in the minds of *Mumukshus* (aspirants of liberation, Beatitude) who are *Āstikas* (believers in the authority and authenticity of the scriptures) saying : “For sages or seers of ancient times *Ātmasākshātkāra* (actualisation, materialisation of Self-Knowledge) accrued, but for the people of the modern times it will not possibly accrue.” We will exemplify a Bhāshya sentence to prove that this above opinion of theirs is without any support of reason :

(1) एतस्मिन्नपि वर्तमानकाले यः कश्चिद्व्यावृत्तबाह्यौत्सुक्यः
आत्मानमेवैवं वेद अहंब्रह्मास्मीति अपोहोपाधिजनितभ्रान्तिविज्ञानाध्यारोपितान्
विशेषान् संसारधर्मानागन्धितमनन्तरमबाह्यं ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मि केवलमिति,
सोऽविद्याकृतासर्वत्वनिवृत्तेर्ब्रह्मविज्ञानादिदं सर्वं भवति । न हि महावीर्येषु
वामदेवादिषु हीनवीर्येषु वा वर्तमानिकेषु (पुरुषेषु) मनुष्येषु ब्रह्मणो
विशेषस्तद्विज्ञानस्य वा अस्ति ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “Even in these present times whosoever he may be - if he gives up hankering after the external objects and cognizes Ātman alone in the manner - ‘I am verily Brahman’ ; if he discards all the special attributes which are conjured up by the delusory knowledge brought about by the *Bhrānti* (delusion) of *Upādhis* (adjuncts), without being affected by the *Vāsanās* (proclivities or propensities) of the *Samsārādharmas* (qualities of trans-migratory life), without there being any interior or exterior and cognizes that ‘I am the Absolute Brahman alone’ -

he - since *Asarvatwa* (not being everything) caused by Avidyā disappears or is sublated - becomes all this indeed. Whether in (sages of the past like) Vāmadeva etc. who were *Mahāvīrya* (of a great, high calibre) or in mere (mortal) human beings of the present times who are (supposed to be) *Hīnavīrya* (of inferior calibre), Brahman does not exist with any distinctions or differences of degree ; nor Its cognition (i.e. Intuitive experience) exists with distinctions of degree.”

It amounts to saying that Shri Śaṅkara has vociferously, stridently declared that - “Jñāna destroys, totally removes Ajñāna ; as also Sārvātmabhāva which is Its (Jñāna’s) fruit accrues without fail to the fit, qualified Jijñāsus even in these modern times.”

IV. The Judgment Evolving out of Deliberation on Vidyā and Avidyā

To recollect here briefly the tenets that are established by means of the sentences that we have exemplified so far will be helpful for the discussion that will be undertaken henceforth. So far we have determined by means of Shri Śaṅkara’s Bhāshya sentences only this much : The Swarūpa, Āshraya, Vishaya, Hetu, Kārya of both Vidyā and Avidyā. However, we have not depicted any *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) whatsoever in answer to questions like : How does Avidyā get destroyed by Vidyā ? From that how does the Paramapurushārtha accrue to us ? In the next part of this treatise we will undertake that task. For the time being, we have shown convincingly the facts that : (a) Mūlāvidyā-vāda is not acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara - the Bhāshyakāra ;

(b) in truth, that doctrinaire theory is opposed to the methodology which is accepted and adopted by the Bhāshyakāra.

For the benefit of the readers we will briefly mention below the quintessence of the previous portions of the treatise. Even though we have given one Bhāshya sentence alone for each of the various topics as examples, it should be reckoned that there exist many such sentences with the same purport in and through Shri Śaṅkara's Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas, and in Shri Sureśwarāchārya's 'Naishkarmyasiddhi' and 'Bṛihadāraṇyaka Vārtika'.

(i) Avidyā means not to have cognized our Ātman or Self in the proper *Swarūpa* (essential nature) ; cognizing It in a doubtful manner ; or cognizing It wrongly, falsely. Vidya means to cognize Ātman properly as He exists in His essential nature.

Apart from the three categories of : (a) *Jñānābhāva* (absence or lack of Jñāna) ; (b) *Samshaya* (doubting) ; (c) *Mithyājñāna* (misconception), a totally different Avidyā which is the root cause for all these three categories called 'Mūlājñāna' or 'Mūlāvidyā', Shri Śaṅkara has not indicated or referred to anywhere in his extant (original) Bhāshyas. He has called *Avyākṛita* (unmanifested) *Nāmarūpas* (names and forms) by various names like Māyā, Prakṛiti, Bīja but not that - 'They themselves are Avidyā' - anywhere in his Bhāshyas. In fact, he has affirmed, vociferously too, that they are themselves '*Avidyā Kalpita*' (conjured up or projected by ignorance). It is also to be seen here and there that he has stated Māyā in the sense of it being a projection or effect of Avidyā, and has used adjectives for Māyā like 'Avidyātmaka', 'Avidyākṛita', 'Avidyā'. But in a chapter

devoted to delineating Avidyā his having stated Avidyā to be *Adhyāśakāraṇa* (cause for misconception) which is *Sadasadvilakṣhaṇa* (totally different from reality and unreality) and which is *Anirvachanīya* (indescribable, indefinable) is not to be seen anywhere.

(ii) Shri Śaṅkara has not raised anywhere in his Bhāshyas the question of the type - “What is the *Upādānakāraṇa* (material cause) for Avidyā ?” To the question - “Why does Adhyāśa occur ?” he has given a simple answer : “Because of the absence of *Ātmajñāna*.”

The endeavour of the proponents of Mūlāvidyāvāda to show or prove that Mūlāvidyā is the *Upādānakāraṇa* for Adhyāśa is totally opposed to the Vedānta Siddhānta as accepted and adopted in the Bhāshyas. For, to imagine that Shri Śaṅkara, who has undertaken to teach that the *Śruti* (scriptures, Upanishadic lore) does not propound *Sṛishṭi* (creation) as *Paramārtha* (absolutely real), has accepted the *Kārya-Kāraṇa-Bhāva* (the categories of cause and effect) and has endeavoured to propound an *Upādāna* for Adhyāśa also is ridiculous indeed.

(iii) By virtue of reckoning in the manner - “I am an ignorant person”, “I do not know myself” - neither is it established that Ātman is the *Āshraya* (substratum) for Avidyā nor He is *Vishaya* (object) for it. Although the common run of people have reckoned in that manner in their workaday transactions, the Absolute Truth is : “*Vidyā* (knowledge) and *Avidyā* (ignorance) that are associated with the abundant mass of objects cannot possibly be the *Dharma* (qualities or attributes) of Ātman” ; this truth has been reiterated throughout his Bhāshyas by Shri Śaṅkara.

Because of the reason that when observed from the *Vyavahāradṛishṭi* (empirical viewpoint) *Vidyā* and *Avidyā* appear to occur in our *Antahkaraṇa* (Mind), both of them are verily the *Dharmas* (attributes) of the *Antahkaraṇa* ; the *Bhāshyakāra* has stressed this point also. He has not signified anywhere in his *Bhāshyas* 'Mūlāvidyā' which, without being related to the *Antahkaraṇa*, has rested in Absolute, Pure *Ātman* and has objectified that Absolute *Ātman*.

(iv) *Brahmavidyā* destroys, drives away *Avidyā* completely ; along with *Vidyā*, *Avidyā* also coexists - this teaching is false. *Shri Śaṅkara* has not accepted anywhere the tenet that - "Even after *Jñāna* has accrued, a little *Avidyā* remains."

(v) The doctrine that - "Even after cognizing, discerning the meaning of *Vedānta Vākya*, another *Jñāna* called 'Sākshātkāra' has to accrue ; for attaining it, performance of *Jñānābhyaśa* (repetition of *Jñāna*) or acquiring *Samādhi* (trance) are necessary" - is opposed to *Vedānta* philosophy. *Shri Śaṅkara* has refuted in unequivocal terms the theory that - "Even after the *Vākyaajñāna* accrues, there is a *Sādhana* (spiritual discipline) which has to be practised constantly" as also the doctrinaire theory that - "Brahman has to be cognized by a *Pramāṇa* (valid means) different from *Vākyaajñāna*."

(vi) *Mōksha* accrues at the very instant or moment of attainment of *Jñāna* ; to believe that for that sake the body should fall off is wrong. Because of the reason that *Mōksha* is verily our *Ātmaswarūpa*, merely by means of *Jñāna*, even in the present times it accrues, without fail, to the fit, qualified persons.

It is to be found that Shri Śaṅkara has written that by means of Nididhyāsana one should attain Paramātmā-sākshātkāra. But he has not stated anywhere that - “After the Jñāna of the meaning of the Vākya there is a need of practising either Nididhyāsana or any other Sādhana” ; but, he has repeatedly proclaimed that - “Vākyaārtha Jñāna alone is sufficient.”

The doctrine of some Vedāntins who aver that - “Videhamukti alone is the genuine, prime Mukti” - is opposed to the opinion of Shri Śaṅkara. It has been stressed in the Bhāshyas that at the very moment of Jñāna accruing and while one is alive only Mukti is attained.

The Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) of Advitīyātman (Non-dual Self)

The most important difference that exists between the Vedāntic methodology adopted by Shri Śaṅkarāchārya and the various methodologies followed by the rest of the commentators is : All the rest of the commentators have believed *Śrutivachana* (the sentences of the Upanishads) to be *Pramāṇa* (authoritative sources) and merely on the support and strength of the Śruti sentences they have formulated the systematisation of *Bandha-Mōksha* (bondage and liberation). But this great teacher (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) especially has affirmed that - “Just like the rest of the *Pramāṇas* (valid means of knowledge), Śruti also is a *Pramāṇa* and hence the meaning it signifies should necessarily be in consonance with *Anubhava* (universal Intuitive experience) alone, and if the *Śruti Vākya*

(Upanishadic sentence) is opposed or contradictory to Anubhava or *Yukti* (logical device) in consonance with Anubhava, then that Śruti Vākya can never be a Pramāṇa at all.” This truth he has clearly emphasized.

The Manner in Which Ātmajñāna Accrues by Means of Śāstra

(a) न हि श्रुतिशतमपि शीतोऽग्निरप्रकाशो वेति ब्रुवत्प्रामाण्यमुपैति ॥

(Gītā Bhā. 18-66).

Meaning : “Even if a hundred Śrutis say that fire is cold and not shining, they cannot acquire any validity.”

(b) ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रं न कारकमिति स्थितिः ॥

(Bṛi. Bhā. 1-4-10).

Meaning : “Śāstra merely reminds but it does not create or bring into existence anything non-existing - this truth is familiar.”

(c) शास्त्रं त्वन्त्यं प्रमाणमतद्धर्माध्यारोपणमात्रनिवर्तकत्वेन प्रामाण्य-
मात्मनः प्रतिपद्यते, न त्वज्ञातार्थज्ञापकत्वेन ॥

(Gītā Bhā. 2-18).

Meaning : “Śāstra is the final valid means of knowledge ; it is called or designated as Pramāṇa because of the exclusive reason of it removing or sublating the *Adhyāsa* (misconception, wrong knowledge) of *Dharmas* (attributes, qualities) which are not belonging to or associated with Ātman, and not because it signifies Ātman who was not known or cognized earlier.”

From the above sentences it becomes quite evident

that - (a) That which is opposed to **Anubhava** can never be a *Śāstra* (scientific, rational treatise) ; (b) because of the reason that the non-dualism of **Ātman** is *Nityasiddha* (eternally established), the task of the *Śāstra Upadesha* (scriptural instruction) is to help remove *Avidyā* of the form or nature of *Adhyāsa* so that the non-dualism of **Ātman** is experienced (Intuitively experienced) by us.

The **Pramāṇa** (Valid Proof) to Say That **Ātman** is **Advitiya** (Non-dual)

If it is said - ‘**Ātman** is **Advitiya**’ - it means that apart from Him there does not exist any world of duality or diversity whatsoever. “How at all can we say or assert that the world that appears before us does not exist ? How at all can we know that even when the world of duality does not exist **Ātman**-exists ?” - to these questions the answers given by **Shri Śaṅkara** are the following :

(i) कथं पुनरन्तःप्रज्ञत्वादीनामात्मनि गम्यमानानां रज्ज्वादौ सर्पादिवत् प्रतिषेधादसत्त्वं गम्यते इति ? उच्यते - ज्ञस्वरूपाविशेषेऽपि इतरेतर-व्यभिचारादसत्यत्वं रज्ज्वादाविव सर्पधारादिविकल्पितभेदवत् । सर्वत्रा-व्यभिचाराज्ज्वस्वरूपस्य सत्यत्वम् । सुषुप्ते व्यभिचरतीति चेत् । न । सुषुप्तस्यानुभूयमानत्वात् ॥

(Māṇḍūkya Bhā. 7, Bhā. portion. 41)

Meaning : “If it is asked : ‘Even though qualities like internal cognition or introspection etc. are seen in **Ātman**, merely by the statement that they do not exist - just as the snake etc. (appearing) in the rope - how at all can we cognize that they (qualities) do not exist in

Ātman ?' - we answer : 'Although Ātman is always (eternally) of the essential nature of *Chaitanya* (Pure Consciousness), because of the reason that they (i.e. those qualities like internal cognition etc.) do not exist - one in the place of another - they are invariably unreal, just like the distinctions or differences like a snake, a streak of water etc., which are imagined in a rope etc. Because of the reason that the *Chaitanyarūpa* (the essential nature of Pure Consciousness) especially does not change whatsoever anywhere, It is real. If it is asked : 'In deep sleep even that Pure Consciousness disappears, is it not ?' - we answer : 'No ; for, even deep sleep is being experienced'."

(ii) श्रुत्यनुगृहीत एव ह्यत्र तर्कोऽनुभवाङ्गत्वेनाश्रीयते । स्वप्नान्त-
बुद्धान्तयोरुभयोरितरेतरव्यभिचारादात्मनोऽनन्वागतत्वम् । संप्रसादे च
प्रपञ्चपरित्यागेन सदात्मना संपत्तेर्निष्प्रपञ्चसदात्मत्वम्, प्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्म-
प्रभवत्वात् कार्यकारणानन्यन्यायेन ब्रह्माव्यतिरेकः इत्येवं जातीयकः ॥

Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-6 ; Bhā. Portion. 418).

Meaning : "Here that logic alone which is approved (permitted) by *Śruti* (Upanishad) is resorted to (used) as being subordinate or subservient to *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience). Because of the reason that both dream and waking leave each other (i.e. they can never coexist or be coeval), Ātman does not have the qualities of these two ; because of the reason that in *Sushupti* (deep sleep) leaving the world of duality (Ātman) merges in His *Sadrūpa* (essential nature of Pure Being), to determine that (Ātman) is verily *Brahmaswarūpa* (of the essential nature of the Ultimate, Absolute Reality) devoid of any

Prapañcha (world of diversity) ; because of the reason that this *Prapañcha* is born from Brahman alone, by virtue of the *Yukti* (logical device) that - 'The effect is not different from the cause' - to determine that *Prapañcha* is not different from Brahman - (logic of this variety alone is called by the word 'Manana' here)."

In the above sentences it is pointed out that : "Reckoning (holistically) both the states of dream and waking along with the entire worlds that appear within them as objects, when we carry out our (Intuitive) deliberations, we notice it in our experience that the waking does not exist in the dream and vice versa." Because of the reason that in the deep sleep neither dream and waking nor the world that appears within them exist, and since Ātman, of the essential nature of Chaitanya, who illumines even the *Prapañchābhāva* (non-existence of the world of duality) exists alone, it has been demonstrated (convincingly) that Ātman is *Advitīya* (non-dual). The following sentence fully supports this conclusion [It has been fully and convincingly proved in a Sanskrit treatise entitled 'Śaṅkara Hṛidaya' published by Adhyātma Prakāsha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, Hassan Dist., 573211 - Karnataka, that the methodology of Avasthātraya is one of the most powerful, efficacious devices taught to the seekers to Intuit the Advitīya Ātmaswarūpa as also it is the mainstay for the system of Intuitive deliberation as expounded by Shri Śaṅkara in his extant Bhāshyas. In many editorial articles also in the past, this methodology had been explained in full details in the monthly magazine published by the Karyalaya viz. 'Adhyātma Prakāsha'.] :-

(iii) अन्यथा हि स्वदेहपरिच्छिन्न एव प्रत्यगात्मा सांख्यादिभिरिव

दृष्टः स्यात् । तथा च सति अद्वैतमिति श्रुतिकृतो विशेषो न स्यात् ॥

(Māṇḍūkya Bhā. 3) Bhā. Portion. 12.

Meaning : “(The entire universe has to be assumed, reckoned to be tagged on to Ātman of the respective state). If it is not done so, it amounts to having cognized Ātman constricted by or confined to the limitations of our bodies alone, just as the followers of other schools of Philosophy like Sāṅkhya, (Yōga) etc. Then the salient feature of ‘*Advaita*’ (non-dualism) as propounded in the Upanishads will be lost sight of.”

In the opinion of the Mūlāvidyāvādins there is no scope or possibility of establishing Advaita ; for, it is their spiritual teaching that in Sushupti too the Prapañcha invariably exists in the form of Mūlāvidyā alone. Hence, it amounts to saying that in their philosophy to affirm the truth that - “Ātman is *Nishprapañcha* (devoid of a world of duality)” - there is no *Pramāṇa* (valid means of proof). For the above sentences too their teachings are opposed indeed.

Ātman Attains Brahmaswarūpa Alone in Deep Sleep

If one has to discern and be convinced about the truth that Ātman is Advaitīya, he has to per force cognize the truth that in Sushupti neither any *Prapañcha* (world of duality or diversity) nor any *Jīvatwa* (soulhood, ‘I’ - notion, egoism) exists therein. If one Intuitively deliberates upon or ratiocinates about the experience of deep sleep, then, it becomes evident, clear that therein we exist as ‘*Shuddha Chaitanyaswarūpa*’ (the essential nature of Pure or Absolute Consciousness). With regard to this teaching

the following Bhāshya sentences will fully support or substantiate it :

(a) संप्रसादशब्दोदितो जीवो सुषुप्तावस्थायां परंज्योतिराकारशब्दितं परंब्रह्मोपसंपद्य विशेषविज्ञानवत्त्वं च परित्यज्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते ॥
(Sūtra Bhā. 1-3-20 ; Bhā. Portion. 270).

Meaning : “The Jīva (soul) who is called ‘Samprasāda’ - reaches or becomes one with *Parabrahma* (the Supreme Absolute Reality) called ‘Ākāsha’ which is of the nature of *Paramaprakāsha* (Supreme brilliance or resplendence) in the deep sleep state and giving up the awareness of special attributes or features, he attains his own essential nature.”

(b) ब्रह्म तु अनपायि सुप्तिस्थानमित्येतत्प्रतिपादयामः । तेन तु विज्ञानेन प्रयोजनमस्ति जीवस्य ब्रह्मात्मत्वावधारणं, स्वप्नजागरित व्यवहार-विमुक्तत्वावधारणं च । तस्मादात्मैव सुप्तिस्थानम् ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 3-2-7 ; Bhā. Portion. 267).

Meaning : “We say that - ‘Brahman is always unfailingly the abode of deep sleep of the Jīva.’ If this truth is cognized or realized, the benefit of determining the truth that - ‘Jīva is verily Brahman’ - accrues, as also the (additional) benefit of determining the truth that - ‘In him the empirical dealings of waking and dream do not exist’ - accrues.”

(c) “अविद्याकामकर्मभिः संसारहेतुभिः संयुक्त एव स्वप्न इति न स्वमपीतो भवति सुषुप्त एव स्वं देवतारूपं जीवत्वं विनिर्मुक्तं दर्शयिष्यामीत्याह” (Chhā. Bhā. 6-8-1; Bhā. Portion. 495).

Meaning : “Because of the reason that in the dream Avidyā-Kāma-Karma which are the cause for Samsāra invariably exist, Jīva cannot be said to have become one with his Swarūpa ; (Uddālaka) has stated this sentence with a view to showing the truth that - ‘In deep sleep alone (Jīva), having disbanded himself of Jīvatwa, attains his *Devatārūpa* (divine essence of Pure Being)’.”

(d) एवमयं स्वाभाविके स्वे आत्मनि सर्वसंसारधर्मातीतो वर्तते स्वापकाले इति ॥ (Bṛi. Bhā. 2-1-19 ; Bhā. Portion. 30).

Meaning : “In this manner in deep sleep he has transcended all the Samsāradharmas in his essential nature of the Self which is quite natural.”

Not only these above-mentioned sentences are in consonance with Śrutis but also they are in full agreement with *Anubhava* (universal Intuitive experience). It is in everyone’s experience that in Sushupti there do not exist any adjuncts whatsoever ; therefore, there is no objection or obstacle whatsoever to say (conclude) that therein the Jīva has attained the essential nature of the non-dual Brahman alone. Even so, the Mūlāvidyāvādins are declaring that in that state too (i.e. deep sleep) due to a beginningless Mūlāvidyā there exists a beginningless division of Jīva-Brahma (Vivarāṇa-67) - quite contrary to *Anubhava*, Bhāshya (of Shri Śankara) and Śruti (Upanishads). If this is not vain pride in, or affinity towards, one’s own theory, what else is it ?

Does Avidyā Exist in Sushupti ?

We have quoted several Bhāshya sentences, which clearly state that - “In Sushupti a Jīva exists in his

Swarūpa and is verily Brahman” - and which are in consonance with Śrutis. From this alone it amounts to saying that in Sushupti there does not exist therein even Avidyā which is the cause for the division or distinction of Jīva and Brahman. Even if we bring to our mind the experience of deep sleep also, it becomes very clear that therein there does not occur any experience whatsoever of Avidyā to us. For, because of the reason that *Adhyāsa* (misconception) itself is Avidyā as also it is a quality or special attribute of the *Antahkaraṇa* (Mind), in Sushupti which is devoid of any Mind there is no room or possibility whatsoever for the existence of Avidyā, of the nature of *Mithyāñāna* (misconception) therein. In this regard the following Bhāshya sentences too will substantiate this teaching :

(i) न च देहाद्यात्मप्रत्ययभ्रान्तिसन्तानविच्छेदेषु सुषुप्तिसमाध्यादिषु कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वाद्यनर्थ उपलभ्यते । तस्माद्भ्रान्तिप्रत्ययनिमित्त एवायं संसारभ्रमो न तु परमार्थतः ॥

(Gītā Bhā. 18-66 ; Bhā. Portion 1142).

Meaning : “In (states like) Sushupti, Samādhi etc. wherein the delusion of the type of - ‘I am verily the body, the senses etc.’ - has been cut asunder, the unwanted disasters like *Kartṛutwa* (‘I’ notion, doership) and *Bhōktṛutwa* (enjoyership) etc. are not seen. Therefore, for this *Samsārabhrānti* (delusion of transmigratory existence) a *Bhrāntipratyaya* (a delusory concept) alone is the cause (or responsible) but not that *Samsārabhrānti* is absolutely real.”

(ii) एतस्मिन् कालेऽविद्याकामकर्मनिबन्धनानि कार्यकरणानि शान्तानि

भवन्ति । तेषु शान्तेष्वात्मस्वरूपमुपाधिभिरन्यथाविभाव्यमानमद्वयमेकं शिवं शान्तं भवति ॥

(Prashna Bhā. 4-7 ; Bhā. Portion 69).

Meaning : “During the time of this (Sushupti) the *Kāryakāraṇas* (the body, the senses) brought about by Avidyā-Kāma-Karma disappear. When they become non-existent, the Ātmaswarūpa which was appearing differently due to (Its apparent association with) *Upādhis* (adjuncts) is rendered to be *Advaya* (non-dual), one and one alone, *Shivaswarūpa* (of the very essence of auspiciousness), *Shānta* (quiescent).”

(iii) इदानीं योऽसौ सर्वात्मभावो मोक्षो विद्याफलं क्रियाकारक-फलशून्यम्, स प्रत्यक्षतो निर्दिश्यते यत्राविद्याकामकर्माणि न सन्ति ॥

(Bṛi. Bhā. 4-3-21 ; Bhā. Portion 213).

Meaning : “Now, about the Mōksha, of the nature of all-pervading entity and the fruit of Vidyā - Its essential nature of Liberation is being depicted perceptually as devoid of Kriyākāraṇaphala. Therein Avidyā-Kāma-Karma do not exist.”

(iv) अत्र चैतत्प्रकृतम् - “अविद्याकामकर्मविनिर्मुक्तमेव तद्रूपम्, यत्सुषुप्ते आत्मनो गृह्यते प्रत्यक्षतः” इति ॥

(Bṛi. Bhā. 4-3-22 ; Bhā. Portion 216).

Meaning : “That Ātmarūpa which is seen directly (Pratyakshataha) in Sushupti - to say that - ‘That (essential nature of Self, Pure Being) Itself is devoid of Avidyā-Kāma-Karma’ - is what is relevant here in the present context.”

All the above-mentioned sentences proclaim without giving any scope for any doubt whatsoever, and quite clearly too, that in Sushupti there does not exist Avidyā. But the proponents of Mūlāvidyāvāda are of the deep-seated opinion that - “All such sentences mention about the *Abhāva* (absence) of *Kāryāvidyā* (i.e. the resultant, effectual ignorance) meaning *Adhyāsa* (misconception) and not Mūlāvidyā which is *Kāraṇāvidyā* (i.e. causal ignorance).” But what is the authoritative source or support for this conclusion ? Has Shri Śaṅkarāchārya at some place or the other in his Bhāshyas mentioned (pointedly or clearly) about Mūlāvidyā which is the cause for Adhyāsa ? - to these questions these disputants can never give a satisfactory, convincing answer at all. Shri Śaṅkara has not stated anywhere that - “In Sushupti there exists Kāraṇāvidyā, but Kāryāvidyā does not exist therein.” If he had stated so, then for his express statement - “Jīva attains Brahmaswarūpa alone in Sushupti” - would have been rendered meaningless.

Which is That Avidyā Which Shri Śaṅkara has Accepted to Exist in Sushupti ?

At certain places in the Bhāshyas it is to be seen that certain statements also are being made to the effect - “In Sushupti there exists Avidyā” - from the *Vyavahārādṛishṭi* (empirical viewpoint). Now let us try to discern as to which Avidyā is mentioned in those contexts from Shri Śaṅkara’s statements themselves :

(a) तत्त्वाग्रहणान्यथाग्रहणाभ्यां बीजफलभावाभ्यां तौ यथोक्तौ विश्वतैजसौ बद्धौ संगृहीताविष्येते । प्राज्ञस्तु बीजभावेनैव बद्धः ।

तत्त्वाप्रतिबोधमात्रमेव हि बीजं प्राज्ञत्वे निमित्तम् ॥ (Māṇḍūkya Kārikā Bhā. 1-11 ; Bhā. Portion 45).

Meaning : “We have accepted that what has been mentioned later on, viz. Vishwa and Taijasa - both of them - are bound being associated or endowed with categories like *Bīja* (cause) and *Phala* (effect) - of the type - ‘*Tattwāgrahana*’ (not having grasped, comprehended the Reality) and ‘*Anyathāgrahana*’ (grasping or comprehending It in a different, mistaken manner), respectively. But Prājña is bound by *Bījabhāva* (the category of cause) alone. For, the singular reason of ‘not (Intuitively) Knowing the Tattwa or Reality’ is the cause for being Prājña.”

(b) सुषुप्तेऽग्रहणमप्यविद्याकृतमिति चेत् । न । स्वाभाविकत्वात् । द्रव्यस्य हि तत्त्वमविक्रिया । परानपेक्षत्वात् । विक्रिया न तत्त्वम्, परापेक्षत्वात् । न हि कारकापेक्षं वस्तुनस्तत्त्वम् । सतोविशेषः कारकापेक्षः, विशेषश्च विक्रिया । जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोश्च ग्रहणं विशेषः । यद्धि यस्य नान्यापेक्षं स्वरूपम्, तत्तस्य तत्त्वम् । यदन्यापेक्षम् न तत्तत्त्वम्, अन्याभावे अभावात् तस्मात् स्वाभाविकत्वाज्जाग्रत्स्वप्नवन्नसुषुप्ते विशेषः ॥

(Tai. Bhā. 2-8 ; Bhā. Portion 216).

Meaning : “If it is asked - ‘Not knowing in deep sleep is also an effect of (i.e. is brought about by) Avidyā alone, is it not ?’ - we answer : ‘Not so ; for, it is but natural. For a *Vastu* (an entity), not undergoing change or transformation is its *Swabhāva* (essential nature of Being) ; for, there is no need of another thing for it ; undergoing change is not *Swabhāva* ; for, another thing is needed for that purpose. For the *Swabhāva* of a *Vastu*, no *Kāraka* (agent of action) whatsoever is needed ; for

an existent Vastu, if any particular mutation, change has to occur, then a Kāraka is needed. *Vishesha* (special attribute or feature) means verily change, transformation ; the special feature of both the waking and the dream is seeing a second thing. Without desiderating another thing, that phenomenon which is the *Swarūpa* (essential nature of Being) of a particular thing - that alone is its *Tattwa* (reality) ; that thing which is formulated (comes into being) desiderating (the aid or help of) another thing - that is not its *Tattwa*. For, if that other phenomenon becomes extinct or disappears, it also disappears. Therefore, because of the reason that in Sushupti the fact of not knowing is *Swābhāvika* (natural), it is not *Vishesha* (a special feature, mutation).''

In both the above two sentences *Agrahana* has been accepted to exist in Sushupti. 'Agrahana' means 'not cognizing' - this is the common meaning adduced to it. But, the Mūlāvidyāvādins are asserting that the word 'Agrahana' signifies here in this context 'Mūlāvidyā' ; for this assertion there is no *Pramāṇa* (valid evidence) whatsoever. In the first instance of Māṇḍūkya Kārikā, to interpret the word 'Agrahana' to mean Mūlāvidyā there is no indication whatsoever ; because of the reason that in the Bhāshyas there is no taint or trace whatsoever of Mūlāvidyā, it is not possible to interpret it in that manner. Here the word 'Bīja' is used ; for it the common meaning of *Kāraṇa* (cause) alone is to be taken and not the (far-fetched, distorted) meaning of *Upādāna Kāraṇa* (material cause) ; thus, in that manner, the Bhāshyakāra has not stated anywhere that Agrahana is the material cause for Anyathāgrahana. Now, the second sentence is from Taittiriya

Bhāshya. Therein also Shri Śaṅkara has used the word 'Agrahaṇa' in the sense of not seeing, perceiving *Dvaita* (duality) but not with the meaning of *Mūlāvidyā* ; besides, to say that this latter meaning has been used there is no clue available at all. If the preceding sentence is examined, here in this context the fact that the word 'Agrahaṇa' means 'not cognizing', 'not perceiving *Dvaita* or duality' alone becomes crystal clear indeed. For, that preceding sentence runs like this :

(c) अन्यस्य चाविद्याकृतत्वे विद्यया अवस्तुत्वदर्शनोपपत्तिः । तद्धि द्वितीयचन्द्रस्य असत्त्वं यदतैमिरिकेण चक्षुष्मता न गृह्यते । नैवं न गृह्यते इति चेत् । न । सुषुप्तसमाधितयोरग्रहणात् । सुषुप्तेऽग्रहणमन्यासक्तवदिति चेत् । न । सर्वाग्रहणात् । जाग्रत् स्वप्नयोरन्यस्य ग्रहणात् सत्त्वमेवेति चेत् । न । अविद्याकृतत्वाज्जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोः । यदन्यग्रहणं जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोस्तदविद्याकृतं । अविद्याभावेऽभावात् ॥

(Tai. Bhā. 2-8 ; Bhā. Portion. 215-216).

Meaning : "If the second entity is rendered to be *Avidyākālpita* (imagined due to ignorance), then it may be possible to know that thing to be an *Avastu* (non-entity) by means of *Vidyā* (knowledge). The existence of a second moon, which appears to a person afflicted by the disease of cataract (of the eye), is verily that which is not appearing to the person not afflicted by the disease of cataract. But if it is asked : 'In this manner *Dvaita* is not found to be imperceptible or unseen at any time, is it not ?' - the answer is : Because of the reason it (i.e. *Dvaita*) is not seen in *Sushupti* and *Samādhi* (Yōgic trance), to say that it is never unseen at all is not proper.

The phenomenon of invisibility in Sushupti may be analogous to an entity not being seen by a person who is engrossed in or attached to another thing, is it not ? The answer to this question is : Not so ; for, in Sushupti nothing whatsoever is seen. If it is said that - 'Because of the reason that in the waking and the dream another thing appears, Dvaita is verily *Satya* (real)' - (we say that) it should not be concluded like that. For, both waking and dream are *Avidyākṛita* (caused by, projected by ignorance); the phenomenon of a second thing being visible in both the waking and the dream is (itself) *Avidyākṛita* ; for, when *Avidyā* disappears it also disappears (becomes non-existent).''

There is no doubt whatsoever about the fact that this sentence has the prime purport of signifying that *Dvaitagrahaṇa* (perception or comprehension of duality) is *Avidyākṛita* and thereby concluding that in Sushupti and *Samādhi* (Yōgic trance) which are devoid of *Avidyā* there is invariably no *Dvaitagrahaṇa* (comprehension of duality). Therefore, here 'Agrahaṇa' means 'not cognizing duality' alone and nothing else whatsoever. Here especially there is no reference to, nor any relevance of, *Mūlāvidyā* at all..

(d) स यद्यात्मा अत्राविनष्टः स्वेनैव रूपेण वर्तते कस्मादयमह-
मस्मीत्यात्मानं वा बहिर्वेमानि भूतानीति जाग्रत्स्वप्नयोरिव न जानातीति ?
अत्रोच्यते । श्रुण्वत्राज्ञानहेतुम् । एकत्वमेवाज्ञानहेतुः ... नानात्वे च कारण-
मात्मनो वस्त्वन्तरस्य प्रत्युपस्थापिका अविद्येत्युक्तम् । तत्र चाविद्यायाः
यदा प्रविविक्तो भवति तदा सर्वेणैकत्वमेवास्य भवति । ततश्च

ज्ञानज्ञेयादिकारकविभागेऽसति कुतो विशेषविज्ञानप्रादुर्भावः ? ॥

(Bṛi. Bhā. 4-3-21 ; Bhā. Portion 214).

Meaning : “If it is asked : ‘Had it been true that that Ātman is not destroyed in this Sushupti and remains (exists) in His own essential nature, then why is it that He neither does cognize Himself in the manner - ‘I am such and such a person’ nor the external creatures, just like in the waking and the dream, in the manner - ‘Oh, these are such and such creatures - ?’ - we give an answer : Listen to the reason (cause) here for not cognizing (*Ajñāna Hetum*) ? (In fact) being (existing as) one and one alone (i.e. non-dual) is the cause for not cognizing.....Avidyā itself, which projects or conjures up anything other than Ātman, is the cause for the phenomenon of diversity or variety ; when one gets freed from that Avidyā, then he becomes one with everything indeed. Because of this reason, since the division or distinction of the cognizer and the cognized object etc. becomes non-existent, how at all is it possible for the distinctive knowledge or cognition of the type - ‘This is such and such a thing’ - to arise ?”

Here it is accepted that in Sushupti, Ajñāna of the type of ‘not cognizing’ exists. It is also clarified that for this ‘*Sarvaikatwa*’ (everything becoming one and the same) is the cause. The fact that here in this context there is not an iota of scope for Mūlāvidyā becomes crystal clear. For, in answer to the question - “Why don’t we have any cognition in deep sleep ?” - the Mūlāvidyāvādins say : “In our waking we do not get any memory, whatsoever of the type - ‘In Sushupti I did not cognize’ ; we invariably remember that we got the experience of Mūlā-

jñāna (or Mūlāvidyā) which is the opposite of Jñāna (knowledge). We determine about *Jñānābhāva* (absence of knowledge) by using the *Arthāpattipramāṇa* (valid means or proof of inferential logic) of the type that - ‘If there were any knowledge in Sushupti, then the memory of this *Ajñāna Anubhava* (experience of ignorance) cannot be tenable, possible and hence - therein Jñāna did not exist’.” - (Vivaraṇa 46). According to this school of philosophy, does it not amount to saying that - “In Sushupti what we reckon as that we did not know (cognize) anything is the memory of *Bhāvāvidyā* (a substantive entity called Avidyā or ignorance) ; by virtue of that memory we get the determinative knowledge of that *Jñānābhāva* (absence of Jñāna or Knowledge, i.e. Consciousness)” - ? If it were true that this doctrine was acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara, then he would have affirmed that - “Because of the reason alone that in Sushupti there exists Mūlāvidyā we do not get any cognition of anything whatsoever” ; instead of that, here in this context Shri Śaṅkara has specifically stated that - “In Sushupti because of the reasons that - (a) Ātman becomes *Advitīya* (non-dual) ; (b) Avidyā which is the cause for *Nānātva* (manifoldness, variety) is absent therein - we do not cognize anything whatsoever therein” ; this fact clarifies that this above doctrine (i.e. of Mūlāvidyā) is not acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara ; not only that, this doctrine is totally opposed to his teaching also ; for, this doctrinaire theory refutes ‘*Brahmāmaikya*’ (unity or oneness of Brahman and Ātman) which the Bhāṣhyakāra has proclaimed unequivocally to be existent in Sushupti. Because of the reason that no person says or opines that the memory (to the effect) -

'I experienced Mūlāvidyā in Sushupti' - accrues on waking - this tenet may be declared as one totally opposed to universal experience.

(e) विशेषविज्ञानोपशमलक्षणं तावत्सुषुप्तं न क्वचिद्विशिष्यते । तत्र सतिसंपन्नस्तावत्तदेकत्वान्नविजानातीति युक्तम् ॥

(Sūtra Bhā. 3-2-7 ; Bhā. Por. 266)

Meaning : "When there is no distinctive cognition or knowledge in Sushupti there does not exist any other special feature whatsoever. Because of the reason that therein one has indeed become merged with *Sadrūpa Brahma* (the Ultimate Reality of the essential nature of Pure Existence), it is quite reasonable to say that he does not cognize (anything)...."

Here the readers should keep in mind that Shri Śāṅkara has affirmed that Sushupti means distinctive knowledge (*Vishesha Vijñāna*) becoming non-existent (disappearing) alone ; he has not at all opined or affirmed that that is an *Avasthā* (state) in which Mūlāvidyā exists - as the present-day Vedāntins assert (*Vivaraṇa* 44). Here too Shri Śāṅkara has stressed that in Sushupti there does not exist any *Vishesha* (special feature, attribute) whatsoever. But, especially the present-day Vedāntins are asserting, totally opposed to Anubhava, that - "In Sushupti due to an association or relationship with Avidyā, Chaitanya begets, to some extent, *Vikalpa Vyavahāra Vishayatva* (having an objectivity due to an empirical transaction of misconception)" - (*Vivaraṇa* 66). Here too as stated in the previous sentence, Shri Śāṅkara has quite stridently stressed that - "Jīva becomes one with Brahman in Sushupti, and for that reason alone he (i.e. Jīva) does not

have the cognition of anything whatsoever.”

(f) यत्तु सुप्तादयो न चेतयन्ते इति, तस्य श्रुत्यैव परिहारोऽभिहितः । सुषुप्तं प्रकृत्य - “यद्वैतत्रपश्यति पश्यन्वैतत्र पश्यति । न हि द्रष्टुर्दृष्टेर्विपरिलोपोविद्यतेऽविनाशित्वात्, न तु तद्वितीयमस्ति ततोऽन्यद्विभक्तं यत्पश्येत्” इत्यादिना ॥

(Sūtra Bhā. 2-3-18 ; Bhā. Portion 124).

Meaning : “The opponent had said that for those who are in deep sleep etc. there is no power or capacity of cognizing, is it not ? To this question (doubt), the Śruti itself gives a *Samādhāna* (consolatory answer) pertaining to the sleeping person of the type - “He is not able to perceive therein, is it not ? Therein (i.e. in Sushupti) being endowed with the capacity of perceiving alone He (i.e. Sākshi Chaitanya or Ātman) does not perceive (cognize) anything. (In truth) for the perception of a perceiver there is no loss or lapse whatsoever ; for, It is devoid of destruction. But, apart from Him there does not exist a second thing or entity ; if it were so, it (i.e. the second thing) could have been seen’ - etc.”

In this statement it has been taught that - “Because of the reason that *Ātman's Jñāna* (Knowledge i.e. Intuition or Pure Consciousness of the Self) is His very Swarūpa, there is no possibility whatsoever of It being destroyed ; therefore, in Sushupti also It is not destroyed. Hence, because of the reason that the phenomenon of *Jñeya* (known object) is not at all existing apart from Ātman in Sushupti, there is no cognition.” Thus it has been taught that - “In Sushupti there is *Aikya* (unity or merger) of *Jñāṇa* (cognizer, knower) and *Jñeya* (cognized object).”

Here also it amounts to saying in clear terms that - ‘Because of the reason of *Ekatva* (unitary existence, non-duality) alone of Ātman, who is *Chaitanya* (of the essence of Pure Consciousness), in Sushupti there is no distinctive knowledge accruing.’ It also serves to clarify that - ‘The Avidyā that exists in Sushupti’ - means verily this distinctive knowledge not being there, but not Mūlāvidyā.

The Purport Behind Teaching Unity (Merger) in Sushupti

Those people who teach that - “In Sushupti, Jīva attains unity or merger in Brahman” - do not at all entertain any opinion that there in deep sleep alone unity (of the two) exists (and nowhere else, i.e. in waking and dream). If we deeply examine and observe that state of Consciousness, this unity (or being one with Brahman i.e. the Intuitive experience of the non-duality of Ātman or Brahman) is instantly reckoned, discerned.; this alone is their intended opinion.

(i) मनःप्रचारोपाधिविशेषसंबन्धादिन्द्रियार्थान् गृह्णन् तद्विशेषापन्नो जीवो जागर्ति । तद्वासनाविशिष्टः स्वप्नान् पश्यन्मनः शब्दवाच्योभवति । स उपाधिद्वयोपरमे सुषुप्तावस्थायामुपाधिकृतविशेषाभावात् स्वात्मनि प्रलीन इवेति “स्वं ह्यपीतो भवति” इत्युच्यते ॥ (Sū. Bhā. 1-1-9 Bha. Portion 85).

Meaning : “By virtue of a relationship with the respective *Upādhis* (adjuncts) called *Manōvṛttis* (mental concepts) cognizing the objects of the senses and acquiring the respective special features, the Jīva remains awake.

Endowed or associated with the *Vāsanās* (latent impressions) of those special features, one who sees the *Svapna* (dream) earns the name of 'Manas'. When he becomes devoid or divulged of these two kinds of *Upādhis*, he becomes submerged, as it were, in his own *Ātman* alone ; for this reason it has been stated that - 'He merges in Himself' -''.

Here we should keep in mind as to how the *Bhāṣhyakāra* (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) has described the three states, viz., 'Associated with adjuncts like the mind and the senses is the waking ; associated with the adjunct of the *Vāsanās* of the mind is the dream ; and divested of both these *Upādhis* is *Sushupti* or a state devoid of the special attribute of any *Upādhi*.' But he has not stated anywhere in his *Bhāṣhyas* - like the present-day *Vedāntins* - about the three *Upādhis* of the type - 'In *Sushupti* the *Upādhi* of *Mūlavidyā* ; in *Svapna* the *Upādhi* of *Antah-karaṇa* (or Mind) ; in *Jāgrat* the *Upādhi* of the body associated with *Antahkaraṇa*.' Although Shri Śaṅkara has stressed here that - 'In *Sushupti*, *Jīva* becomes merged (*Laya*), as it were, in his *Ātman* ; for this, the reason is the non-existence of his two *Upādhis* alone' - some make an attempt to interpret the sentence by distorting its meaning in the manner - "Ātman (i.e. *Jīva*) does not completely merge in *Sushupti* ; because of the reason that he half merges, the *Bhāṣhyakāra* has stated that - *Pralīna Iva*". It need not be gainsaid here that this interpretation is contradictory to the very essence, purport implicit in the sentence. For, if we interpret the sentence according to the *Vyākhyāna* (post-Śaṅkaraites' sub-commentary), instead of merging in *Ātman*, the undesirable plight or

predicament of saying that he merges in Avidyā will entail us. The following sentence also supports our this above opinion :

(ii) अपि च न कदाचिज्जीवस्य ब्रह्मणा सत्संपत्तिर्नास्ति । स्वरूप-
स्यानपायित्वात् । स्वप्नजागरितयोस्तूपाधिसंपर्कवशात्पररूपापत्तिमिवापेक्ष्य
तदुपशमात्सुषुप्ते स्वरूपापत्तिर्वक्ष्यते ॥ (Sūtra Bha. 3-2-7 ; Bhā.
Portion 266)

Meaning : “Apart from this, there is no moment of time whatsoever when Jīva has not merged with Brahman ; for, one’s own *Swarūpa* (essential nature of Being) never leaves, or departs from, oneself. But, assuming that due to association with Upādhis in waking and dream it appears as though another form is acquired - it is being stated that in Sushupti because of the reason that the Upādhis disappear, he attains his *Swarūpa*.”

Here there is no scope for even an iota of doubt. Brahman is verily the Jīva’s *Swarūpa* ; because of the reason that he has reckoned (misconceived) the Upādhis themselves to be himself, in the waking and the dream he appears as though having acquired another form. When compared with the forms of those states, in Sushupti the Jīva appears as if he has attained his own *Swarūpa* ; thus Shri Śaṅkara has analysed threadbare and clarified repeatedly. If it were true that in Sushupti there existed this (concocted) *Mūlāvidya*, then how at all could Shri Śaṅkara afford to articulate stridently that Jīva attains his own *Swarūpa* therein ?

Thus, because of the reason that Brahma-*Swarūpa* eternally exists, to cognize (realize) that one is verily of

Brahmaswarūpa is itself Mōksha ; now it evolves that with regard to the tenet that-“In order to cognize (Intuit) in that manner the real cognition (Intuition) of Sushupti will be of great help” - the Śrutis have expounded that - “Therein *Satsampatti* (becoming one with Reality) accrues” - is it not ? Unable to discern this secret, some people have been erroneously believing that - “In Sushupti there exists the *Āvaranashakti* (the veiling power) of Avidyā ; Turiyāvasthā or Samādhi Avasthā alone is the one Avasthā in which Avidyā totally disappears.” Although there is no further need for stressing the truth that - “Brahmātmāswarūpa is not confined to or restricted by any one particular Avasthā” - we will exemplify yet another Bhāshya sentence in support of that teaching :

(iii) न चायं व्यवहाराभावोऽवस्थाविशेष निबद्धोऽपिधीयत इति युक्तं वक्तुम् । ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इति ब्रह्मात्मभावस्यानवस्था विशेषनिबन्धनत्वात् ॥
(Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-14 ; Bhā. Portion 435).

Meaning : “It is also not proper to say that this phenomenon of the absence of empirical transactions is confined to any particular Avasthā ; for, the *Brahmātmabhāva* (the Intuitive experience of Brahman as Ātman) which is taught in the Śruti in the manner - ‘That Thou Art’ - is not caused due to any particular Avasthā whatsoever.”

Although the above sentence is sufficient to refute the doctrine propounded by certain people, that - “Only after the fall of the body the *Pūrṇabrahmātmabhāva* (the complete or consummate Self-Realization) devoid of any *Vyavahāra* (empirical transactions) called ‘*Videhamukti*’

accrues'' - the following sentence is a stronger or more powerful evidence to silence such disputants :

(iv) “न हि ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इत्यस्य वाक्यस्यार्थस्तत्त्वं मृतो भविष्यसीत्येवं परिणेतुं शक्यः । ‘तद्धैतत्पश्यन् ऋषिर्वाग्मदेवः प्रतिपेदेऽहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च’ इति च सम्यग्दर्शनकालमेव तत्फलं सर्वात्मत्वं दर्शयति ॥” (Sūtra Bha. 3-3-32 ; Bhā. Portion 381).

Meaning : “The sentence - ‘That Thou Art’ - cannot possibly be interpreted in a distorted manner like - ‘After you die, you will become That’. The Śruti teaches that at the very moment or instant of the dawning of Ātmajñāna its fruit also called ‘*Sarvātmata*’ (the unity of everything in the Self) accrues, by virtue of the sentence - ‘When the sage by name Vāmadeva cognized this *Tattwa* (Reality), at that very moment he cognized in the manner - ‘I am verily Manu as also the Sun’. ”

Why is it that the Jīva Who Has Merged in Brahman in Sushupti Wakes up Again ?

There is no reason to provide an answer exclusively or especially for this question ; for, after it has been determined with certainty or conviction the truth that “The Jīva always (perennially) is of the essential nature of Brahman (Ātman)” - to say that He (Ātman) acquires the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep is itself *Aparamārtha* (unreal, false). Even so, if we observe from the Vyavahāradṛishti it appears as though in Sushupti there exists *Aikya* (unity or non-duality) and in Svapna and Jāgrat distinctions exist. Although Jīva merges or becomes one with Brahman in Sushupti, as long as he

does not cognize (Intuit) his Brahmaswarūpa he appears as if he is existing distinct from Brahman. Therefore, it has become quite necessary to clarify that merely on the ground of his attaining Sushupti no Jīva (whosoever he may be) can attain Mukti.

(i) मायामात्रं ह्येतद्यत्परमात्मनोऽवस्थात्रयात्मनावभासनं रज्ज्वा इव सर्पादि भावेनेति ॥ (Sūtra Bha. 2-1-9 ; Bhā. Poriton 424)

Meaning : “Just as the rope appears to be phenomena like the snake etc., Paramātmā appearing as if having (or undergoing) the three Avasthās is mere *Māyā* (illusion).”

(ii) सोऽयमात्मा परमार्थापरमार्थरूपश्चतुष्पादित्युक्तः । तस्यापरमार्थ-
रूपमविद्याकृतं रज्जुसर्पादिसममुक्तं पादत्रयलक्षणं बीजाङ्कुरस्थानीयम् ।
अथेदानीमबीजात्मकं परमार्थस्वरूपं रज्जुस्थानीयं सर्पादिस्थानीयोक्तस्थानत्रय
निराकरणेनाह ॥ (Māṇḍūkya Bhā. 7 ; Bhā. Portion 37).

Meaning : “It was stated previously that this Ātman is endowed with four *Pādas* (footprints) which are having forms both *Paramārtha* (really real) and *Aparamārtha* (unreal, false), is it not ? So far, His *Pādatrayarūpa* (forms of three footprints) - which are *Aparamārtha* (unreal, false), *Avidyākṛita* (brought about by ignorance), similar to the rope-snake etc. and which have assumed forms of cause and effect like the seed and sprout - have been explained. Now on, the *Paramārtharūpa* (the Absolutely real, essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness), devoid of any category of cause, is being depicted through the means of sublateness, negating these three Avasthās which are like the rope-snake.”

In these above statements it has been taught that the phenomenon of *Avasthātraya* (the three states of Consciousness) itself is *Aparamārtha* (false appearance, unreal) as also that a form or nature devoid of *Avasthās* is verily the real essential nature of *Ātman*. Although *Ātman* exists (perennially) in the form of *Chaitanya* (Pure Consciousness), because of the reason that the *Avasthās* are getting separated, each leaving the other, *Anātman* (not-Self), which is of the form of *Avasthās*, is not *Paramārtha-satya* (the Absolute Reality beyond time-space-causation categories) ; this has been previously indicated on the valid authority of the *Bhāshya* statements.

(iii) विद्वानविद्वांश्च सुषुप्ते यद्यपि सत्संपद्यते तथाप्येवंविदेव स्वर्गलोकमेतीत्युच्यते ॥ (Chā. Bhā. 8-3-3 ; Bha. Por. 622).

Meaning : “Although both the knowing and the unknowing persons merge in *Sadbrahman* (the Absolute Reality of Pure Being) in *Sushupti*, only he who has realized, cognized (the truth) that - ‘*Paramātman* exists in one’s heart in (His Pure nature of) *Ātmarūpa* (essential nature of Self)’ - attains *Svargalōka* (the region of Heaven) in *Sushupti* everyday ; thus it has been taught in the *Śruti*.”

(iv) यस्माच्चैवमात्मनः सद्रूपतामज्ञात्वैव सत्संपद्यन्ते अतस्त इह लोके यत्कर्म निमित्तां यां यां जातिं प्रतिपन्ना आसुर्व्याघ्रादीनां ‘व्याघ्रोऽहम्’, ‘सिंहोऽहम्’ इत्येवम्, ते तत्कर्म ज्ञानवासनाङ्किताः सन्तः सत्प्रविष्टा अपि तद्भावेनैव पुनराभवन्ति पुनः सत आगत्य ॥ (Chā. Bhā. 6-9-3 ; Bhā. Por. 508).

Meaning : “Because of the reason that they thus without cognizing that they are Sadrūpa merge into *Sat* (the Absolute, Pure Being or Reality) in Sushupti, whichever *Janma* (birth) they had earlier acquired thinking in the manner - ‘I am a tiger’, ‘I am a lion’ etc. - being associated with those very particular symptoms of *Vāsanās* (latent impressions, proclivities) of Karma and Jñāna, they have attained Sadrūpa ; even so, once again they assume those respective forms alone having come out of the *Sat* (their essential nature of Pure Being).”

(v) यथा हि सुषुप्तिसमाध्यादावपि सत्यां स्वाभाविक्यामविभागप्राप्तौ मिथ्याज्ञानस्यानपोदितत्वात् पूर्ववत्पुनः प्रबोधे विभागो भवत्येवमिहापि भविष्यति ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-9 ; Bhā. Por. 425).

Meaning : “Although in Avasthās like Sushupti, Samādhi etc. quite naturally the divisions of Jīva and Brahman have become extinct, because of the reason that the wrong knowledge (or misconception) is not got rid of, once again, as usual, in the waking the division or distinction occurs invariably - in the same manner here too (i.e. even though in *Pralaya* or dissolution of the world of duality there accrues a state of non-division, once again during *Sthitikāla* or time of sustentation this division or distinction appears) we should understand.”

Here we have to read carefully with all alertness what the *Bhāṣhyakāra* (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) has said, viz. in Sushupti quite naturally *Avibhāga* (non-division or unity) has occurred. Even so, some (so-called) followers of Shri Śaṅkara professing to be Vedantins affirm that in Sushupti there exists *Jīva-Brahmavibhāga* (division or distinction

of the soul and the Ultimate Reality of the Self) - (Vivarāṇa 66). They also assert that in *Asamprajñāta Samādhi* (a trance in which there is no awareness of a second thing) there exists unity or oneness (Vivarāṇa 204). As though this is not enough, not only do they explain the word - 'Mithyājñāna' found in the above sentence as *Mūlājñāna* (the root cause of ignorance) or *Mūlāvidyā* which is *Mithyārūpa* (of the nature or form of unreality) but also aver that - "The division of Jīva and Brahman that exists in Sushupti is not *Avidyākārya* (a projection or effect of Avidyā) ; it is *Anādi* (beginningless) and is *Avidyāvasha* (within the control or purview of ignorance) - (Vivarāṇa 67). Further they are also separately saying that - "Avidyā, Jīvatwa (soulhood), Jīva-Brahma Vibhāga, '*Avidyā Chetana Sambandha* (a relationship between ignorance and Consciousness) - all these phenomena are *Anādis* (beginningless categories) which are under the control of Avidyā' - (Vivarāṇa 67). To conclude that all these tenets are imagined by themselves and are totally opposed to the Bhāshya, the above sentence itself is a sufficient authoritative source. For, here in this sentence because of the reason that it has been stated that in Avasthās like Sushupti, Samādhi etc., *Avibhāga* (non-division) exists quite naturally, it is not possible to say that in this regard there is any difference whatsoever between Sushupti and Samādhi. In states like Sushupti, Samādhi, intoxication, swooning etc. there does not exist any duality and hence '*Advitīyatwa* (non-dualism) itself is quite natural to Ātman - thus Shri Śaṅkara has also affirmed here and there in his Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas. Despite all this, to those people who obstinately accept

the distinction that in Sushupti there exists Avidyā but not in Samādhi, the defect of being contradictory to reasoning will attach itself as they do not have a convincing answer to the knotty question of - 'Why does the duality appear to one after he wakes up from or comes out of Samādhi ?' Since we have stressed already at many places that there is no support of the Bhāshyakāra to interpolate Mūlāvidyā, by analysing in the manner - 'Ajñāna is of false unreal form' - in this regard there is nothing more to be said here.

(vi) (a) अपि च मिथ्याज्ञानपुरःसरोऽयमात्मनोऽबुद्ध्युपाधिसंबन्धः ।
न च मिथ्याज्ञानस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानादन्यत्र निवृत्तिरस्तीत्यतो यावद्-
ब्रह्मात्मतानवबोधस्तावदयं बुद्ध्युपाधिसंबन्धो न शाम्यति ॥ (Sūtra Bhā.
2-3-30 ; Bhā. Por. 141).

Meaning : "Apart from this, the fact that Ātman has a relationship with the *Upādhi* (adjunct) of *Antahkaraṇa* (Mind) is due to *Mithyājñāna* (misconception) ; because of the reason that this *Mithyājñāna* cannot be got rid of without attaining *Samyajjñāna* (the real Self-Knowledge), as long as one does not cognize *Brahmātmatva* the relationship or association with the adjunct of Mind cannot be avoided."

(b) यथा लोके पुंस्त्वादीनि बीजात्मनाविद्यमानान्येव बाल्यादिष्वनुप-
लभ्यमानान्यविद्यमानवदभिप्रेयमाणानि यौवनादिष्वविर्भवन्ति, नाविद्य-
मानान्युत्पद्यन्ते । षण्ढादीनामपि तदुत्पत्तिप्रसङ्गात् । एवमयमपि बुद्धिसंबन्धः
शक्त्यात्मना विद्यमान एव सुषुप्तप्रलययोः पुनः प्रबोधप्रसवयोराविर्भवति
.... दर्शयति च सुषुप्तादुत्थानमविद्यात्मकबीजसद्भावकारितम् - 'सतिसंपद्य

न विदुः' 'सति संपद्यामह इति' 'त इह व्याघ्रो वा सिंहो वा' इत्यादिना ॥
(Sūtra Bhā. 2-3-30 ; Bhā. Por. 142).

Meaning : “ In our workaday world, because of the reason that in boyhood the manliness etc. do not appear or manifest, we have reckoned that they do not exist. But, in truth, they really exist and thereby manifest in states like youth etc. and not that they first do not exist at all and later they are born ; if they were to be born in that manner, for eunachs etc. too they would necessarily have to be born. In the same way, this *Buddhisambandha* (association with intellect) having existed in states of Sushupti, Pralaya in a potential form, later on manifests in the waking as also during the time of the sustenance of the world For this reason alone, since in Sushupti the seed which is conjured up by Avidyā exists, they wake up again - thus the Śruti teaches in the manner - 'सति संपद्य' - 'त इह व्याघ्रो वा' etc.”

We should discern very carefully the topics that are taught here one by one. First of all, it has been stated that - 'The relationship that exists between Jīva and *Buddhi* (intellect, i.e. Antaḥkaraṇa or Mind in its entirety) is brought about or caused by *Mithyāñāna* meaning, misconception. Thereafter, it has been stated that - 'This relationship having invariably existed in Sushupti as also in Pralaya in a potential form, later on manifests itself.' Thirdly, it has been mentioned that - 'Even the fact that it exists in the potential form or seed form in Sushupti is *Avidyātmaka* (due to ignorance alone), meaning, due to wrong knowledge (misconception) it has been imagined only.' The intended or implicit purport of teaching of

these Bhāshya sentences is : “Just as a person who is under the spell of *Bhrānti* (delusion) of the type of misconstruing a rope to be a snake - even when that snake imagined by him (due to this delusion) does not appear - he believes sternly that that snake invariably exists and further when once again he sees the rope from a distance he misconceives in the manner : ‘This is verily a snake’ - in the same manner, in Sushupti and Pralaya although this Jīva-Buddhi Sambandha disappears - merely on that count it does not get destroyed completely and till one attains Jñāna it invariably exists.”

Not being able to discern this subtle teaching, merely on the basis of the usage of the expression ‘Avidyātmakabīja’ - these present-day Vedāntins have mis-construed this erroneous theory of ‘Mūlāvidyā’ ; this ridiculous interpretation reminds us of the story of a Don Quixote who believed that the lady who had worn a green attire alone was his wife. In order to discern the truth that Shri Śāṅkara has used in his Bhāshyas the three words or expressions viz. - ‘Avidyātmaka’ , ‘Avidyākṛita’ and ‘Avidyākalpita’ - to mean ‘due to wrong knowledge or misconception’ alone, the reader should refer to Sūtra Bhāshya 2-1-14, Bhā. Por. 440, in which a description of Sarvajñatva is given in detail.

(c) यथा ह्यविभागेऽपि परमात्मनि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रतिबद्धो विभागव्यवहारः
स्वप्नवदव्याहतः स्थितौ दृश्यते, एवमपीतावपि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रतिबद्धैव
विभागशक्तिरनुमास्यते ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-9 ; Bhā. Por. 425).

Meaning : “Although in Paramātmān there does not exist any division whatsoever, during the time of the

sustenance (existence) of the world of duality brought about due to misconception, the transaction of distinguishing - just as it appears in a dream - appears unfailingly ; similarly during *Pralaya* (dissolution of the world), due to *Mithyājñāna* alone, this *Vibhāga Shakti* (the power or potency of division) exists - thus we should determine using the *Anumāna Pramāṇa* (valid means of inference).’’

(d) मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तश्च बन्धो न सम्यग्ज्ञानादृते विस्त्रंसितुमर्हति ।

तस्मात् तत्प्रकृतित्वेऽपि सुषुप्तप्रलयवद्बीजभावावशेषैवैषा सत्संपत्तिरिति ॥

(Sūtra Bhā. 4-2-8 ; Bhā. Por. 549).

Meaning : “The bondage which is caused by wrong knowledge cannot possibly be loosened without attaining the proper *Jñāna* ; therefore, it should be understood that the fact of this *Satsampatti* (merger in Reality) that accrues (in death) too is - just like *Sushupti* and *Pralaya* - occurring with the subsistence of *Bīja Bhāva* (belief or concept of the existence of a seed or cause).’’

If we consider the four sentences mentioned above with insight we can reckon the truth that - “*Dvaita* has been caused by *Mithyājñāna* alone ; in states like *Sushupti*, *Marana* (death) and *Pralaya*, although all the adjuncts have become extinct, because of the reason that *Jñāna* has not accrued, *Bandha* (bondage) which is caused by *Mithyājñāna* does not disappear ; for that reason alone, it becomes known that the empirical transactions, brought about by *Mithyājñāna*, of the type - ‘We slept and woke up ; we gave up the body of the previous birth and have worn the body of the present birth ; as soon as the creation took place we were all born’ - are being carried out. If we observe from the *Paramārthadṛishti* - just as

in Sushupti in the waking too, just as in Pralaya even after Sṛṣṭi occurs, just as Maraṇa even after rebirth has occurred - Ātman, in reality, exists devoid of any world of duality (*Nishprapañcha*) ; Anātman - all of it is, in truth, *Mithyā* (false, unreal).''

How is the Viewpoint of a Brahmajñāni ?

This topic we have depicted at the end of the previous deliberation itself. Here we will mention a couple of sentences by way of examples or illustrations and conclude this chapter.

(i) त्रिष्वपि कालेष्वकर्तृत्वाभोक्तृत्वस्वरूपं ब्रह्माहमस्मि, नेतः पूर्वमपि कर्ता भोक्ता ब्रह्मासं, नेदानीम् नापि भविष्यत्काले इति ब्रह्मविदवगच्छति । एवमेव च मोक्ष उपपद्यते । अन्यथा ह्यनादिकालप्रवृत्तानां कर्मणां क्षयाभावे मोक्षाभावः स्यात् । न च देशकालनिमित्तापेक्षो मोक्षः कर्मफलवद्भवितुमर्हति । अनित्यत्वप्रसङ्गात्, परोक्षत्वानुपपत्तेश्च ज्ञानफलस्य ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 4-1-13 ; Bhā. Por. 528).

Meaning "The Brahmajñāni has determined that - I am verily Brahman who is devoid of *Kartṛtva* (agentship of action), *Bhōkṛtva* (enjoyership) in all the three periods of time. Even prior to this present moment I was neither a Kartṛ nor a Bhōkṛ ; even now also I am not (either of them) ; nor will I be in the future.' And, only if it is so the attainment of Mōksha becomes tenable ; as otherwise, the Karmas which have been carried on from time immemorial will not get destroyed and thereby Mōksha will invariably be rendered unattainable. It is also not proper to deduce that just like the

Karmaphala (fruit of an action), Mōksha desiderates causes like time, space and causation before it accrues ; for, then in that event it will have to become *Anitya* (non-eternal). Apart from this, it is not proper to say that Jñānaphala is *Parōksha* (indirect, mediate).''

Because of the reason that Mōksha is verily *Brahmā-mabhāva* (the cognition or Intuitive experience that my Self is Itself Brahman) which is eternally self-established and which is available or attainable here and now merely by cognizing It properly, the doctrinaire tenet of the post-Śaṅkara Vyākhyānakāras to the effect - "Even after getting rid of *Anirvachanīya* (indefinable, indescribable) Avidyā a Jñāni becomes a Jīvanmukta, he is associated with *Avidyāśeṣa* (a little remnant of ignorance) and only after the fall of the body (i.e. posthumously) attains Mōksha'' - is not acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara ; this fact is extremely clear now. In this regard we will mention one more supporting sentence and conclude this topic.

(ii) तस्मान्मिथ्याप्रत्ययनिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य सिद्धं जीवतोऽपि विदुषोऽशरीरत्वम् ॥ (Sūtra Bhā. 1-1-4 ; Bhā. Por. 60).

Meaning : "For this reason, since the phenomenon of being endowed with a body is caused by *Mithyā Pratyaya* (false concept), a Jñāni while alive alone becomes devoid of a body ; this truth is established now."

V. Conclusion

We will recapitulate as to what is the final spiritual teaching (Siddhānta) of Shri Śaṅkara here and conclude this chapter. This Siddhānta is not a topic which is to be

taken up for mere discussion or debate. Only to those who, as a consequence of meritorious deeds performed in previous births, have acquired *Chittashuddhi* (a mind cleansed, purified of its dross) or only to those who in this very life have assiduously practised *Karmayōga* and *Dhyānayōga* and have earned one-pointed devotion towards the *Parameshwara* (Supreme Lord) - to such great souls only this (i.e. this Advaita Siddhānta) accrues by virtue of *Īśwara Prasāda* (benign grace of the Lord) alone. Therefore, we have not written this book with the intention of winning the admiration or approbation of scholars who are totally under the spell or grip of vain logic, or with the hankering after gaining name and fame, money or honour etc. in the world ; and providing a means (vocation) to those who are studying this spiritual science of Vedānta. In truth, a well-meaning desire to depict, in a brief, concise manner, the very core of *Vedānta Prakriyā* (Vedāntic traditional methodology) is the motive for this effort to the best of our knowledge and is meant for the benefit of *Jijñāṣus* (seekers) who are *Āstikas* (those who fully believe in the Śāstras) and who aspire to become *Kṛtārthas* (those who have achieved the goal of human existence) by attaining *Brahmavidyā* which has been taught in a traditional manner by an illustrious line of teachers like Shri Gauḍapādāchārya, Shri Śaṅkarāchārya and the latter's close and direct disciple, Shri Sureśwarāchārya - who have affirmed that this *Vidyā* was handed down by many great sages who were well-versed in the traditional method of teaching *Brahmavidyā*. If the readers study this text from this viewpoint only they will surely get the full benefit from this treatise.

The quintessence of Shri Śaṅkara's Siddhānta is : Brahman which is *Advitīya* (non-dual) and is of the very essence of *Satyam* (reality), *Jñānam* (Consciousness), *Ānandam* (Bliss) is alone the *Paramārtha* (Absolute Reality) ; apart from It neither the *Jīvas* (souls) nor the *Jadaprapañcha* (gross world of duality) exists whatsoever. Even so, this *Jīvatwa* (soulhood) and *Jadatwa* (grossness) are *Adhyasta* (super-imposed) upon It ; to wit, the common people believe that they are *Jīvas* of the essential nature of *Kartṛus* (agents of action), *Bhōkṛus* (enjoyers) ; that they have a relationship with *Sharīra* (body), *Indriya* (senses), *Prāṇa* (vital force), *Manas* (mind), *Buddhi* (intellect) and *Ahaṅkāra* (ego or 'I' notion) and that since they are experiencing the external objects like *Shabda* (sound), *Sparsha* (touch) etc. they are getting *Sukha* (happiness) and *Duḥkha* (unhappiness, grief). It is not possible to say exactly as to when and from what cause this belief was gained or created in Man. However, this exists in everyone invariably in his state of non-discrimination ; by virtue of this alone the empirical dealings of the type of - 'I' and 'mine' - have ensued ; this wrong or false knowledge which has existed from time immemorial - the Vedāntins call '*Adhyāsa*' as also '*Avidyā*'. If we deliberate upon the Reality as It is in an incisive manner, the Intuitive Knowledge of the type - '*Advitīya* (non-dual) Brahman alone which is not *Kartṛu* or *Bhōkṛu* is myself' - accrues. That correct, Intuitive Knowledge is called '*Vidyā*'.

Since all empirical transactions are carried out invariably being well within the reign and realm of *Avidyā*, the queries like - "To whom is *Avidyā* ? About which

subject-matter or topic ? What is its effect ? How does it disappear or become extinct ? ” - etc. too are to be made within the realm of Avidyā alone. If we observe properly (Intuitively), either the Avidyā that is engendered in Jīvas or it getting destroyed by anything else - both these phenomena are not to be found at all ; when we assume and say that it (i.e. Avidyā) exists, the *Bandha* (bondage) that is caused due to it to the Self of everyone of us or when we say it is gone, the *Mōksha* (liberation) that accrues - neither of them exists whatsoever. Without cognizing the Siddhānta that - ‘Thus due to Avidyā alone all empirical transactions are being carried out’ - in the present times some people have raised the question - ‘From which cause is this Avidyā born or has arisen ?’ - and have imagined and inferred a root cause for that Avidyā also ; they have called this root cause ‘Mūlāvidya’. This blunder is committed by them because they have verily forgotten the essential nature of Avidyā. For, since all Vyavahāra has ensued due to Avidyā alone, the fact that even the Vidyā-Avidyā Vyavahāra has been caused due to Avidyā only need not be analysed or explained once again. For the concept of cause, the concept of time is invariably needed ; for, that entity or substance which invariably precedes the effect of action in time is itself called ‘*Kāraṇa*’ (cause). But when time itself is the offspring of Avidyā, how at all is it possible for the phenomenon of cause, which is itself the offspring of time, to exist before or prior to Avidyā - ? To affirm in the manner - “Preceding, or prior to, Avidyā too there can be a cause” - is akin to the humorous saying - ‘The grandson served ghee during the luncheon held to celebrate

the christening ceremony of his grandfather' - is it not ? This point the *Mūlāvidyāvādins* (proponents of Mūlāvidyā theory) should think over in a quiet manner.

In this treatise not only have we depicted Shri Śaṅkara's Vedāntic methodology of teaching in a brief manner but also have pointed out at various places the defects that exist in the Mūlāvidyāvāda. We have also given herefore a list of main questions that can be posed before or put to the Mūlāvidyāvādins so as to be of some benefit to researchers of Truth who are impartial or unbiased, as also to seekers who are dedicated to Self-Knowledge. Without thinking ever for a moment that these are dry, vain objections which are meant only to bring to light the defects and deficiencies that exist in that theory, the readers should believe fondly that it is only a ladder to reach those dizzy heights of this subtle Siddhānta and read them with all meticulous attention and ratiocinate as well - thus we entreat them.

Some Questions Put To Mūlāvidyāvādins

(1) Why is it that none of the preceptors like Shri Śaṅkara, his grand-preceptor Shri Gauḍapāda, Shri Sureśwara, who has himself mentioned that he has served at the feet of his master (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) and has written his treatises - has used in his own principal works even a word about 'Mūlāvidyā' ?

(2) While they have used words like Mūlaprakṛiti, Bīja, Shakti, Avyakta, Avyākṛta, Māyā to connote the

subtle phenomena of names and forms, why have you believed (rather mistaken) those words to mean Mūlāvidyā?

(3) Even though those preceptors have vociferously, unequivocally stated that the phenomenon called by various names like Mūlaprakṛiti etc. is *Kalpita* (imagined) due to Avidyā, why are you saying that it is called by the name of 'Mūlāvidyā', which is quite different from Jñānābhāva, Samshaya, Mithyājñāna and its Saṃskāra as also which is the cause for all of them ?

(4) Although the Bhāshyakāra (i.e. Shri Śaṅkara) has been very clearly saying that in our *Vyavahāra* (i.e. workaday, empirical transactions) Avidyā appears to be the quality or attribute of the *Antahkaraṇa* (Mind), why are you asserting that it exists from time immemorial (Anādi) in Ātman alone ?

(5) When Shri Śaṅkara has proclaimed that - "The fact that Avidyā, which is of the nature of Adhyāsa, being responsible or the cause for the undesirable problem of the empirical transaction of the type of 'I' and 'mine' is clearly perceptible to everyone" - why are you trumpeting that - "There exists a phenomenon called 'Mūlāvidyā' which is the material cause (Upādāna Kāraṇa) for even *Adhyāsa* (misconception)" - totally contradictory to universal experience as well as to the Bhāshya?

(6) When the Bhāshyakāra is reiterating that - "The empirical transaction of 'I' and 'mine' is caused due to Mithyājñāna ; in it there is a mixing up, blending of reality and unreality" - what is the reason for your

distorting his sentence and interpreting it in a bizarre manner to mean that - “Adhyāsa is caused by an *Upādāna Kāraṇa* (material cause) called - ‘Mithyā-Ajñāna’ ?”

(7) For the Bhāṣhya sentence - “Punḍits (scholars, wise people) call Adhyāsa - ‘Avidyā’ -” you have imagined a meaning of the type - “Because Adhyāsa is the effect of Avidyā, it is being called (by Punḍits) Avidyā” - what authority or support is there for this mis-interpretation ? It seems that some among you of late have been saying - “Punḍits say that it is Avidyā, but we do not say like that” - is it true ? If so, the next sentence - “To determine the essential nature of the *Vastu* (entity, substance) is called ‘Vidyā’ -” too signifies invariably the opinion of the Punḍits - does it not amount to saying in that manner ? If that too is true, then does it not amount to your offering a new but dubious present to Shri Śaṅkara in the form of stating that - ‘Shri Śaṅkara has not mentioned anything whatsoever in his Adhyāsa Bhāṣhya with regard to Vidyā and Avidyā’ ?

(8) Although Shri Śaṅkara has stressed that - “Brahma-vidyā completely destroys or dispels Avidyā” - why are you spreading the contradictory opinion of - ‘For Jñānis too there exists *Avidyāśeṣa* (a remnant of Avidyā)’ - ?

(9) When it is stated in the Bhāṣhyas that - “The understanding (knowledge) by the people that they have a body (i.e. they are embodied beings) is itself *Mithyājñāna* (misconception) ; a Jñāni, who has got rid of that - though alive - is *Aśarīri* (unembodied) alone” - why is it that some among you are asserting that only after the

fall of the body (i.e. posthumously) alone the complete or consummate *Mukti* (liberation) ensues ? Some others among you have been making the ridiculous statement that, “Because of the reason that when *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge) accrues all of *Ajñāna* entirely disappears, the very moment *Jñāna* accrues the body falls down dead” - why ? Is *Jñāna* a kind of a big disease ?

(10) Although Shri Śaṅkara has *repeatedly* affirmed that - “Through the means of acquiring the *Padārthajñāna* (knowledge of the entity born out of the meaning of the words) if the seeker discerns the purport of the Vedāntic or Upanishadic *Mahāvākyas* (pregnant, profound sentences) - merely on that count one gets the *Brahma Sākshātkāra* (the Intuitive experience of Brahman as the Self) and thereafter once again to cognize Brahman there is no need of any other separate *Pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge) or *Sādhana* (spiritual practice)” - why are you - in contradiction to this tenet - each one in his own different manner - saying that - “By means of *Vākyābhyāsa* (repeated practice of uttering or by rote of sentences, called *Mahāvākyas*) or *Vākyayukti Abhyāsa* (practice of the logical devices mentioned in the Upanishadic sentences), or *Dhyāna* (meditation) the seeker has to obtain *Sākshātkāra* (materialisation or perceptual experience of the Self) in *Nirvikalpaka Samādhi* (trance in which there are no mental concepts whatsoever)” ?

(11) When the Bhāshyakāra has stated that - “Due to *Avidyā*, Brahman appears to be the cause for the *Jagat* (world of duality) -

(i) Why are some of you saying that - 'Mūlāvidyā is the Upadāna Kāraṇa ; since Brahman is the support for it, Brahman is said to be the cause' ;

(ii) Why some others are saying that - 'Brahman endowed or associated with a potential power of Mūlāvidyā or Māyā is the cause' ;

(iii) Why yet others are saying that - 'Māyā and Brahman together are the cause for the world of duality' - thus with all sorts of opinions why are you trying to establish or strengthen *Kāraṇavāda* (theory of cause) alone ?

(12) If Mūlāvidyā is a really existing entity why is it that it is not comprehended by the common people ? At least after you have established it by virtue of certain *Pramāṇas* (valid means of cognition), why is it that your opponents do not accept it ? Although you have been asserting that it is *Sākshisiddha* (established by eyewitness), with regard to its existence what is the reason for so many arguments and counter-arguments being whipped up ? Why is it that even a taint or smell of the *Pramāṇas* that you have enumerated for Avidyā is not to be found in the *Bhāṣyas* ?

(13) To have described that - 'Mūlāvidyā is not *Sat* (real), not *Asat* (unreal), not *Sadasat* (real-cum-unreal) ; it is not *Bhinna* (different, separate) from Brahman, not *Abhinna* (non-different), not *Bhinnābhinna* (different-cum-non-different) ; it is not *Sāvayava* (having parts, components), *Niravayava* (not having parts), nor is it *Ubhayātmaka* (having both parts and no parts) - as also it is in all respects *Anirvachanīya* (indefinable, indescribable)' - where is any supporting statement in the

Bhāshyas ? For this what support of any *Yukti* (logical device) is there ?

(14) Where is an illustration to assert that *Anirvachanīya Avidyā* (ignorance which is indefinable) has transformed itself in the form of the world ? When Shri Śāṅkara exemplified the illustration viz. - ‘The sea-shell appears as silver’ which is in truth a *Bhrānti* (delusion) that is *Lōkasiddha* (universally established or acknowledged), why did he not elucidate it in the manner - ‘In the sea-shell a silver which is *Anirvachanīya* has been produced’ - ? How at all can people discern that in that manner an *Anirvachanīya* silver is born or produced ? If it is not possible for everyone to discern it, how at all can that be said to be an illustration for *Adhyāsa* ? In our workaday world if both the common people and the expert observers agree or accept, only then it can be called an illustration, is it not ?

(15) When the *Anirvachanīya Rajata* (indescribable silver) is destroyed by means of *Shuktijñāna* (the correct knowledge of sea-shell), what happens to *Avidyā* ? If that is going to be destroyed, why cannot *Brahmasākshātkāra* accrue ? If it (i.e. *Avidyā*) is not being destroyed, where at all is there an illustration to assert that - “By means of correct knowledge *Avidyā* gets destroyed” - ?

(16) What is the authoritative source or support for some among you to imagine that - ‘*Avidyā* which has produced *Anirvachanīya Rajata* (indefinable silver) is called *Tūlāvidyā* and it is different from *Mūlāvidyā*’ - ? If it is quite different, to affirm that *Mūlāvidyā* is destroyed

by Vidyā what valid means are there ? Some of you are saying that - 'Tūlāvidyā is an *Amsha* (part) alone of Mūlāvidyā, or an *Ākāra* (form, shape) or *Avasthā* (state)' - what is the Pramāṇa for this assertion ? First saying that - 'For Mūlāvidyā there does not exist any *Amsha*, or any *Ākāra*, or any *Avasthā* ; it is *Anirvachaniya*' - and later to imagine *Amsha*, *Ākāra* etc. for it - is it not a self-contradiction ?

(17) You are saying that Mūlāvidyā invariably exists in all the three states of Jāgrat, Svapna and Sushupti, is it not ? If so, are these *Avasthās* not a *Pariṇāma* (transformation, mutation) of Mūlāvidyā ? Are they *Bhinna* (different, separate) from Mūlāvidyā, or *Abhinna* (non-different) or *Anirvachaniya* (indescribable) ? Or else, are they (i.e. three states) themselves a certain kind of bizarre object or substance ?

(18) If Mūlāvidyā exists in *Avasthā Traya* (all the three states of Consciousness), then why cannot we say it is, just like Ātman, *Paramārtha* (Absolutely a real entity) ? To affirm that it gets destroyed by Vidyā if the statement that - "It does not exist in Nirvikalpaka Samādhi" - is itself a supporting evidence, then for the Jñāni to wake up from that state of trance once again, there is no sustaining cause whatsoever, is it not ? If turning away and giving up the waking state to get merged in Reality is itself called 'Mukti', then wherefrom can we get a *Guru* (preceptor) who can instruct us about the experience of a *Mukta* (Realized or liberated Soul) ?

(19) How at all is it reasonable to accept destruction

to Mūlāvidyā which is *Anādi* (beginningless) ?

(a) If you say - 'Just as the Naiyāyikas accept destruction for *Prāgabhāva* (non-existence prior to birth or creation) which is *Anādi* - we too accept destruction for Avidyā which is *Anādi*' - then it is not *Abhāva* (non-existence or non-entity) - is it not ?

(b) If you say - 'Just as Buddhists and others have accepted *Nivṛutti* (liberation, freedom) even for *Anādi*, we too accept it' - what answer will you give to those who argue that the *Yukti* (logical device) that - 'Anādi cannot be got rid of' - entails them (i.e. Buddhists etc.,) also invariably ?

(c) If you maintain that - 'Just as Mithyājñāna etc. Mūlāvidyā also is Ajñāna and hence it may be got rid of' - does it not amount to saying that - 'Because of the reason that the Mithyājñāna or misconception of *Shuktyādi* (i.e. sea-shell etc.) was Verily called Ajñāna, they are capable of being destroyed by Jñāna' - ? If that is also accepted, merely on the ground of calling sea-shell 'Ajñāna', that too will have to be *per force* removed by Jñāna, is it not ? If you say - 'That is also acceptable to us' - even to say that - 'That way, it is *Jñāna Nāshya* (that which can be destroyed by Knowledge)' - and to accept also what Pramāṇa have you got ? - This prime question remains unanswered, is it not ? If further you contend that - 'For that we have Śruti itself as Pramāṇa' - then what answer will you give to opponents who affirm that - 'By virtue of this Śruti Pramāṇa alone we say that this world of *Shukti* (sea-shell) etc. is real' - ? If you say that - 'Their interpretation of the Śruti is not

correct' - then what proof or supporting evidence have you to demonstrate that the interpretation (of the Śruti) that you have made is correct ? In case we accept that the interpretation that you have made is itself correct, even then does it not amount to you by yourself accepting that 'Advaita Siddhānta also - just like Dvaita Siddhānta - is to be discerned merely based on faith alone' - ?

(d) *Mādhwas* (followers of Dvaita philosophy of Shri Madhwāchārya) and *Rāmānujas* (followers of Vishishtādvaita philosophy of Shri Rāmānujāchārya) opine that - '*Anādi* (beginningless) *Avidyābandha* (bondage due to ignorance) is destroyed only by Parameshwara' ; Mādhwas aver that - 'By Īśwara's desire alone the covering of Avidyā has ensued to Jīvas'. For the followers of both these schools of philosophy which are founded on faith, at least by virtue of Īśwara's desire the Avidyā may be destroyed. But you who have undertaken the task of establishing Avidyā as also its destruction by means of *Yukti* (logical devices) and *Anubhava* (Intuitive experience) - what will be your plight or predicament if you speak against or contrary to Anubhava ?

(20) In your doctrine which says that - 'In Sushupti every thing merges in Mūlāvidyā alone - what is the cause for the waking to occur once again ? No other cause whatsoever apart from or other than Avidyā exists at all, is it not ? If you say - 'The *Samskāra* (latent impression) of *Pūrvakarma* (past actions) alone which has merged in Avidyā is the cause' - what is the motive force as the cause for its activation ? If you say - '*Svabhāva* (innate nature) itself is the cause' - then why don't you

join the ranks of hard-core *Svabhāvanādin*s who maintain that - ‘*Svabhāva* (the essential nature of Being) alone is the cause for Bandha as also Mōksha’ - ? If you contend that - ‘Īśwara alone is the cause ?’ - then is He different from Ātman or non-different ? You call yourselves ‘Advaitins’ and so you cannot say - ‘He is *Bhinna* (i.e. different from Ātman) - is it not ? If He is *Abhinna* (non-different), then - Ātman being the common denominator for all the three Avasthās - what cause can you adduce for *Avasthābheda* (distinction among the states) ?

(21) In your theory which states - ‘Jīvanmuktas too have a *Lesha* (remnant) of Avidyā’ - does not a self-contradiction arise against your own teaching that - ‘Avidyā does not have any *Amsa* (part)’ - ? If for Avidyā too there can possibly be parts, because of the reason that as and when each Jīva becomes Jīvanmukta, to that extent the *Avidyāmsa* (part of Avidyā) should necessarily become less and less, why is it that the Avidyā that existed from *Anādikāla* (time immemorial) has not worn out despite the fact that endless Jīvas become *Mukta* (freed, liberated) ? Or, in the alternative, why is it that even to a little extent it has not become less ?

(22) If it were true that for Jīvanmuktas too till the body falls off Avidyālesha invariably exists, then how at all can one believe the teaching that - “By means of Jñāna alone Avidyā is got rid of ?” If Avidyā is not got rid of, then does it not amount to discarding, disowning the tenet that - ‘By means of Jñāna, Mukti accrues’ - ?

(23) Jñāna signifies the essential nature of an object

or substance alone but not that it removes or destroys its cover ; if it is not so, by the Jñāna that - 'Within a pot a light is kept' - the pot also which is the cover for the light will have to be destroyed, is it not ? If you say that - 'Mūlāvidyā is not a real cover ; it is an Anirvachaniya cover ; therefore, it can be sublated' - then you will have to *per force* admit that - 'Just as Jñāna sublates *Mithyājñāna* (misconception) etc. it sublates this too' - is it not ? Then in that event, just as a cognition of the type - 'In the beginning I had such and such *Mithyājñāna* ; now it is sublated, falsified' - accrues, we should get a cognition of the type - 'There existed a cover of such and such an Anirvachaniya *Ajñāna*. That is sublated now' - is it not ? In that manner where is it occurring ? Because of the reason such an occurrence does not ensue, why cannot we say that such an Avidyā itself does not exist ?

(24) Because of the reason that in the three states also Mūlāvidyā exists, in order to cognize it to be *Asatya* (unreal) which Avasthā has to be examined ? Even if we accept that those who examine such an Avasthā attain Jñāna, in which Avasthā should those Jñānis teach about the *Tattwa* (Reality) ? We cannot possibly go to their Avasthā ; since in our Avasthā invariably Avidyā exists, it is not possible for them to instruct that Avidyā does not exist. Thus there will be a formidable hurdle or impediment for Brahmōpadesha Itself, is it not ? What about this predicament ?

(25) All have accepted that one should listen to the instructions of the Śāstra and the Guru, one should then do *Manana* (ratiocination over those teachings) and practise

Nididhyānsana (Intuitive contemplation) and that these alone are the spiritual means or practices for Brahmajñāna. Because of the reason that all these are responsible or instrumental for the *Samskāra* (latent or subtle impressions or refinement) that occurs in the *Antahkaraṇa* (Mind), Jñāna also should necessarily accrue in our *Antahkaraṇa* alone. But because of the reason that you are asserting that - 'Mūlāvidyā which is *Jñānavirōdhi* (opposed to Jñāna or Self-Knowledge) is not a *Dharma* (quality or attribute) of the *Antahkaraṇa*' - how at all can Jñāna remove or destroy Ajñāna ?

The Final Judgement That Evolves from the Discussion of Mūlāvidyā

[Paramapūjya Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji, of revered memory, had published this treatise in 1940. At that time some scholars of Karnataka had objected to Swāmiji's opinions and their deliberations were published in the monthly 'Adhyātma Prakāsha'. Swāmiji had published his answers to those deliberations in the 13th series of the monthly magazine. Since that article is aptly related and relevant to this treatise of 'Śaṅkara Siddhānta' it has been appended here for the benefit of the genuine students.]

All those who have read the treatise - 'Śaṅkara Siddhānta' - have come to know as to what is this doctrine called 'Mūlāvidyāvāda' to a large measure. The (post-Śaṅkara) Vyākhyānakāras have written that - (a)

‘There exists a phenomenon called Mūlāvidyā which exists in indivisible or undivided *Chinmātra* (Pure Consciousness) and which has kept that Chinmātra as its object’ ; (b) ‘That alone is the *Upādāna Kāraṇa* (material cause) for the *Kāryāvidyā* (the effect-form of ignorance) which is known to be the *Adhyāsa* (misconception) between (the natures of) Ātman and Anātman’ ; (c) ‘In order to remove this alone all the Upanishads have begun their teachings.’ For the last so many years I have been arguing that this theory is opposed to Shri Śaṅkara’s Siddhānta. The essence of my arguments is, in truth, that - ‘The Adhyāsa between Ātman and Anātman is itself the Avidyā which is the root cause for Samsāra - and this alone is the teaching of Shri Śaṅkara’.

Among those objections which have been raised in opposition to this my conclusion by various writers who have examined it - I have endeavoured here to take for detailed discussion only the important ones. Those people who are having a deep sense of dedication to and reverence for finding out the *Tattwa* (the Ultimate Reality) will have to decide the merits and demerits of this discussion or debate.

I have believed that the rule or regulation that I have formulated to the effect - ‘In order to determine the Śaṅkara Siddhānta, directly taking recourse to Shri Śaṅkara’s (original) Prasthānatraya Bhāshyas alone is to be reckoned as the first and predominant *Pramāṇa* (valid means of proof) - is acceptable to the critical assessors. Therefore, I do not examine or consider the statements of the other Bhāshyakaras (commentators). From this it is quite clear that especially those commentaries which I

have opined to be opposed to the original Śāṅkara Bhāshyas cannot be brought in support of the present deliberation as valid evidence by any one, whosoever he may be. Some people have shown to me that Shri Sureśwarāchārya (the direct disciple of Shri Śāṅkara) himself has used the words like - ‘Mūlāvidyā’, ‘Mūlājñāna’. But whether Shri Sureśwarāchārya has championed the cause of or pointed out unequivocally the present theory of ‘Mūlāvidyā’ is itself a controversial factor. Apart from this, by virtue of the regulation that the Śāṅkara Siddhānta has to be determined exclusively from the original Bhāshyas in the present discussion undertaken by us, the fact that - even Shri Sureśwarāchārya’s commentary is not needed - is acceptable to both the parties. Therefore, for the time being we do not take into consideration even the statements of the Vārtikākāra (i.e. Shri Sureśwara).

Has Shri Śāṅkarāchārya Used the Word ‘Avidyā’ With Two Meanings ?

The critics say that for this word there are two meanings indeed. But Shri Śāṅkara has clearly stated in Brahma-Sūtra Bhāshya 1-1-7 that - (अनेकार्थत्वस्यान्याय्यत्वात्) ‘For one word alone to imagine many meanings is unreasonable.’ In answer to the *Pūrvapaksha* (*prima facie* objection) of the Sāṅkhyan, viz. “For the word ‘Jyōthi’ there are two meanings ; in the same way for the word ‘Ātman’ too two meanings can be conceived, is it not ?” - Shri Śāṅkara has stated this above Sūtra-Bhāshya statement in his Siddhānta ; not only that but also he has decided and declared that - ‘In case we accept that for one word there can be two meanings - even then by

examining the relevant *Prakarana* (topic under discussion) or the *Upapada* (the adjoining or supporting word) we will have to determine that one of them is *Mukhyārtha* (predominant meaning) and the other *Gouṇārtha* (secondary meaning). Therefore, to decide that - “Shri Śaṅkara too has used in his Bhāshyas the word ‘Avidyā’ in one and the same *Mukhyārtha*, and in case he has used it with another meaning then it should be invariably with *Gouṇārtha*” - is quite reasonable indeed. This regulation is acceptable to the *Vyākhyānakāras* (i.e. post-Śaṅkara sub-commentators on the original Bhāshyas). For, while writing their commentary on the Bhāshya sentence - ‘Adhyāsa is called by the Puṇḍits or scholars Avidyā’ - they have stated : ‘Since Adhyāsa is *Avidyākārya* (effect of ignorance), Puṇḍits have called it Avidyā’. Therefore, in everyone’s opinion for the word ‘Avidyā’ one and one *Mukhyārtha* alone exists - thus we have to conclude.

What is the *Mukhyārtha* (Predominant Meaning) for the Word ‘Avidyā’ ?

In the opinion of the *Vyākhyānakāras*, Mūlāvidyā itself is the principal meaning of the word ‘Avidyā’ ; since *Adhyāsa* (misconception) is its effect, Adhyāsa is said to be Avidyā in a *Gouṇārtha* (secondary meaning or sense). But now the question relevant here is - ‘In the Bhāshyas, in which predominant sense or meaning is this word used ?’ To this question my answer is : ‘Adhyāsa alone is the *Mukhyārtha* for this word. For, Shri Śaṅkara has very clearly stated : “तमेतमेवलक्षणमध्यासं पण्डिता अविद्येति मन्यन्ते” [That Adhyāsa with this *Lakshana* (symptoms) the

scholars reckon to be Avidyā]. Prior to this sentence he has not only mentioned - ‘Instead of this, to determine the *Vastu Swarūpa* (essential nature of a substance) as it actually is (exists) is itself called Vidyā’ - but also in the *Upasamhāra* (conclusion) he has affirmed that - “In order to teach or signify *Ātmaikatva Vidyā* (the non-dualism of the Self) so as to be able to destroy this (i.e. Adhyāsa or Avidyā), which is *Anarthahetu* (the cause for all mundane calamities) - all the Upanishads are begun.” In fact, the Adhyāsa Bhāshya (which is the introductory small chapter to Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya) has been written by him with the prime and specific purport of elucidating Avidyā which has to be destroyed by Brahmanavidyā. Here in this context the Bhāshyakāra has vociferously, so to say, proclaimed also that - ‘Adhyāsa itself is Avidyā’. If there existed any other entity or substance - whatsoever it may be - apart or separate from this which was destructible by Vidyā and which had been called ‘Avidyā’ with the Mukhyārtha - then this was the context or place where the Bhāshyakāra had necessarily to signify. But he had not even taken its name. Therefore, for the word ‘Avidyā’ the Mukhyārtha is verily Adhyāsa. The *Śruti Prakaraṇas* (the relevant topics from the Upanishads) of the Bhāshyas are a pointer (nay, clincher) for this conclusion ; this truth every one has to accept.

This word ‘Avidyā’ being used by Shri Śaṅkara with any other meaning whatsoever is not to be found anywhere else. One critic has exemplified the sentence - ‘अविद्या अव्याकृताख्या’ - (Īśā Bhā., Mantra 12) - from Īśāvāsya Upanishad Bhāshya. But that is not the *Avidyā Prakaraṇa*

(chapter devoted to the topic of Avidyā) ; it is the Prakaraṇa dealing with or deliberating upon the topic of *Asambhūti Upāśana*. For the word 'Avidyā' used there in that context, since it has a relationship of proximity with the *Upapada* (adjoining word) of 'Avyākṛitākhyā', this is not the correct word connoting 'Avidyā' which Shri Śaṅkara has exemplified as '*Adhyāsa Rūpāvidyā*' in Sūtra Bhāṣhya and which is directly opposed to Vidyā. Therefore, on the two counts of the Prakaraṇa and the proximity of another word in this context 'Avyākṛita' is called 'Avidyā' from the view-point of *Gouṇāvṛitti* (a secondary sense). Thus from this sentence it can be determined but not that the word 'Avyākṛita' itself has the predominant meaning of 'Avidyā'. If the above sentence of Īśāvāsyā Bhāṣhya is compared to the sentences like 'This is called Avidyā' ; 'Keeping in front Adhyāsa called Avidyā, all mundane, religious (Scriptural) transactions involving *Pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge) and *Prameya* (objects of knowledge) are born (carried out)' - this difference becomes quite clear. Therefore, it is quite reasonable and proper to conclude that - "Adhyāsa is nothing but what Shri Śaṅkara says *Mukhyāvidyā* (the principal Avidyā) which is *Nirupapada* (devoid of any proximity of another qualifying word) ; but what is mentioned in the above context (i.e. Īśāvāsyā Bhāṣhya) is the *Gouṇāvidyā* (ignorance of a secondary meaning) by name 'Avyākṛita'."

The world's subtle state called by various names of 'Avyākṛita', 'Avyakta', 'Nāmarūpa', 'Bīja', 'Prakṛiti' etc. being referred to as 'Avidyā' is not to be found anywhere else in the Bhāṣhyas. Thus Avyākṛita being called 'Avidyā' can be surmised as being used in Gouṇārtha, is it not ?

But in Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya there exists a sentence - 'अविद्या ह्यव्यक्तम्' (Br. Sūtra Bhā. 1-4-3). On the basis of this, some critics believe that it amounts to saying that - 'Avyakta itself is Avidyā'. This is not proper. For, this sentence appears in a Prakaraṇa which undertakes the discussion of the question - "In the Kathōpanishad sentence of 'महतः परमव्यक्तम्' (Avyaktam is greater than Mahat) - whether the word 'Avyakta' refers to Sāṅkhyans' Pradhāna or not ?" This is not a sentence which delineates the meaning of the word 'Avidyā'. On the other hand, it is a sentence which states the meaning of the word 'Avyakta'. "Avidyā means Adhyāsa alone. For the word 'Avyakta' found in the Śruti this alone is the meaning" - thus here the Siddhānta has been expounded. Therefore, this sentence does not provide even an iota of support for Mūlāvidyāvāda.

Which is the Gouṇārtha for the Word 'Avidyā' ?

To determine the answer to this question this Bhāshya sentence is an excellent supporting evidence. For, the principal Sūtra for this is 'तदधीनत्वादर्थवत्' - (Brahma Sūtra 1-4-3). The Bhāshyakāra has interpreted this Sūtra in two different ways. In both the meanings, he has adduced a Mukhyārtha to the word 'Avyakta' and has determined that the Gouṇārtha of that word is *Sharīra* (body). While determining the Mukhyārtha, the essence of what Shri Śaṅkara has written is : "Sāṅkhyans have used the words 'Avyakta' and 'Mahat' to mean 'Pradhāna which is *Swatantra* (independent)' and *Mahāttatwa* (the category of Mahat), respectively ; but in the Śruti there are different meanings for these words. To wit, 'Mahānātmā' means

'the *Buddhi* of *Hiraṇyagarbha* (i.e. macrocosmic Intellect). Or in the alternative, *Jīva* ; 'Avyakta' means 'Avyākṛita' or 'Avidyā'. When for the expression - 'Mahānātmā' the meaning of 'macrocosmic intellect' is adopted, the word 'Avyakta' should be adopted to mean 'Avyākṛita' ; when for 'Mahānātmā' we take the meaning of 'Jīva', we should adopt the meaning of 'Avidyā' for the word 'Avyakta'. Thus since according to the Bhāshya the scriptural word 'Avyakta' has been interpreted with two meanings of : (i) Avyākṛita, (ii) Avidyā, it is quite clear here that in the above context the Avidyā, which is the second meaning as explained above and which is without any relationships whatsoever with Avyākṛita, is directly taken with the Mukhyārtha. Not only this. It is further established that Avyakṛita being called 'Avidyā' is invariably with Gouṇārtha alone.

Quite in consonance with this interpretation, Shri Śaṅkara has in the first commentary very clearly expressed that - "The *Bīja Shakti* (potential power of a seed) called 'Avyākṛita' (which he has referred to as 'Avyakta') is *Avidyātmaka* (of the essence ignorance) as also it is that which can be destroyed by Vidyā." In the Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya (1-4-3) - "विद्यया तस्या बीजशक्तेर्दाहात्, अविद्यात्मिका हि बीजशक्तिरव्यक्तशब्दनिर्देश्या" it is not possible to interpret the word 'Avidyātmika' merely as 'Avidyā.' For, since with the second meaning, for the word 'Avyakta' the explanation of 'Avidyā' alone is given, in both the explanations the word 'Avyakta' amounts to being interpreted as 'Avidyā' alone - thereby the defect of '*Punarukti*' (repetition of a statement) attaches itself to the Bhāshya. *Avidyātmaka* means *Avidyā Kalpita* (imagined, conjured up by Avidyā)

alone. The fact that - “The sentence - ‘Because of the reason alone that Bijashakti is Avidyā Kalpita, it is burnt away by Vidyā’ - is the one which adduces the motive behind the previous sentence” - is clarified by the word ‘Hi’ (alone) in the expression ‘अविद्यात्मिका हि’. Therefore, because of the reason that Avyākṛita is Avidyā Kalpita, that too can be called ‘Avidyā’ for name’s sake ; this fact is established from this reasoning. If this is acceptable, then what we had propounded as our opinion previously that - “In the sentence - ‘अव्याकृताख्या अविद्या’ - only Gouṇāvidyā has been stated” - gets strengthened.

But now a question like - “For the word ‘Avidyāt-maka’ can we imagine (adopt) a meaning of ‘Avidyā Kalpita’ ?” - arises. For that my answer is only this much : Shri Śaṅkara, while explaining the meaning of his own sentence in Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya (2-1-14), viz. - ‘अविद्यात्मकनामरूपबीजव्याकरणापेक्षत्वात् सर्वज्ञत्वस्य’ - has written - ‘सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्यात्मभूते इवाविद्याकल्पितेनामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः, प्रकृतिः - इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलप्येते - This should be referred to and its meaning discerned. Now the fact that Shri Śaṅkara’s interpretation of the word ‘Avyākṛita’ is verily ‘Avidyā Kalpita’ becomes as clear as the Sun’s brilliance. This very meaning is explained by Shri Śaṅkara by the later word ‘Avidyā Kṛita’ also.

Because of the reasons that : (a) This situation has arisen to indicate that - ‘Since names and forms as also the *Kārya Karaṇas* (body, senses) which are the effects of these names and forms are *Avidyātmaka* (*Avidyā Kalpita*

i.e. conjured up by ignorance), the distinction of Jīva and Īśwara is verily *Vyāvahārika* (an empirical transaction) and not *Pāramārthika* (absolutely real)' ; (b) 'since Shri Śaṅkara teaches that by means of Vidyā this *Upādhi* (adjunct) gets destroyed - this phenomenon of names and forms is Avidyā Kalpita and hence it is *Mithyā* (unreal, false). Therefore, it gets destroyed by Vidyā.' This auspicious Siddhānta gets evolved by the meaning of 'Avidyā Kalpita'. Some people have raised the following question out of a sheer overbearing attitude : 'Why should we not interpret the words 'Avidyā Kalpita' and 'Avidyā Kṛita' as 'Avidyātmaka' only and thereby attach the meaning of - '*Avidyāśwarūpa*' (of the essential nature of Avidyā) ?' But to assert that the Bhāṣhyakāra has used the word 'Avidyā Kalpita' with that interpretation, there is no clinching evidence whatsoever ; in fact, even in the literary sphere too a usage of this kind is not to be found. It is in vogue to call a silver idol 'Rajatātmaka' or 'Rajatakṛita' ; but who ever calls silver itself by those epithets ?

In certain places Shri Śaṅkara has given the special attribute of 'Avidyā Lakṣhaṇa' to Prakṛiti. I have quoted above (Bra. Sūtra Bhā. 2-1-14) a sentence in which Shri Śaṅkara has stridently asserted that Prakṛiti is verily *Avidyā Kalpita Nāma-Rūpa* (names and forms imagined, conjured up due to ignorance). It being so, the critics should kindly think as to how interpreting the expression 'Avidyā Lakṣhaṇa' to mean 'Avidyā Kalpita' is wrong. In Sanskrit the word 'Lakṣhaṇa' does not have the exclusive meaning of '*Swarūpa*' (essential nature of Being) ; for example, "चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः" - in this Jaimini Sūtra what meaning

this word 'Lakshana' has can be examined. Similarly in the usage of the expression - "लक्षणाशून्यम्" - in Gaudapāda Kārikā, the commentary of Shri Śaṅkara as 'लक्ष्यतेऽनयेति लक्षणा प्रमाणम्' should be discerned.

Another point. The Bhāshyas bristle with epithets like 'Avidyālakshana', 'Avidyākṛita', 'Avidyākalpita', 'Avidyāpratyupasthāpita' [In the Brahma Sūtra Bhāshya 2-2-2 there is a sentence : "अविद्याप्रत्युपस्थापितनामरूपमायावेश-वशेन" - herein it has been very clearly mentioned that due to Avidyā the Māyā of names and forms is imagined (misconceived) ; this fact the readers should discern and remember] ; all these are always, invariably, used as qualifying epithets for 'names and forms' by Shri Śaṅkara. If names and forms are themselves Avidyā, then not even at one single place the word 'Avidyā' being used as a special significant qualifying word for the phenomenon of names and forms is to be found ! Why is it ? Even a single epithet of the type of 'Nāmarūpakṛitāvidyā', 'Nāmarūpakṛitādhyāsa' etc. is not found to have been used for Adhyāsa ! Why is it ? If it were true that Nāmarūpa itself was Mūlāvidyā and that alone was the root cause for Adhyāsa, and to denote this itself was so important for Shri Śaṅkara, then without even mentioning it for once would he possibly leave behind that task of imagining that opinion of his to the Vyākhyānakāras ? Quite contrary to this, could he have repeatedly proclaimed that names and forms themselves are 'Avidyākalpita' ? These facts should be ruminated over quite cautiously by all proponents of Mūlāvidyā.

For Adhyāsa the body and the senses are needed ; therefore, Avyākṛita or Mūlāvidyā, which is the cause for those body and senses, necessarily precedes, them, is it not ? By means of Ātmānātmaviveka (deliberation on the phenomena of Ātman or Self and Anātman or not-Self) alone Adhyāsa disappears (becomes extinct) ; but Anātmamithyātva (the unreal, false nature of not-Self) becoming fully determined, can Advaita be established ? Thus some people raise an objection.

Both these objections are those which have raised their ugly heads because of a failure to discern the essential nature of Adhyāsa as described by Shri Śaṅkara. For, even the deliberation about Ātman and Anātman is itself the resultant effect or function of Adhyāsa. In fact, to imagine *Pramāṇutva* (I notion, ego-consciousness), *Prameyatva* (objectivity) in Ātman is itself Adhyāsa ; it being so, it may amount to saying that - ‘The *Viveka* (deliberation on) of Ātman and Anātman is *Adhyāśabādhaka* (capable of falsifying misconception) ! The whole gamut of *Loukika* (empirical, mundane) and *Vaidika* (scriptural) *Vyavahara* (empirical dealings) is verily the magic spell cast by the magician called ‘Adhyāsa’ ! The transactions of cause and effect categories too is an empirical transaction indeed ; therefore, that is also *Adhyasta* (super-imposed). If we discern the subtle purport behind Shri Śaṅkara’s statement in Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya 2-1-27 : “The names and forms which are Avidyākalpita are acquiring the *Vyaktarūpa* (manifest form) and the *Avyaktarūpa* (unmanifest form) ; for Brahman, which is of their form, *Parīṇāmādi* (transformation etc.) appear as if they have occurred to It” - then we never have any doubt remaining

in this regard. **Adhyāsa** is not an event occurring in time ; we should keep in mind here that time itself is the offspring of **Adhyāsa**. Then the subtle, lofty teaching that - '**Ātman** alone is **Satyam** (Reality) ; all of **Anātman** (not-Self) is **Anṛita** (unreal, false) ; mixing up these, any understanding that we entertain is itself **Adhyāsa**' - gets rooted in our mind.

The quintessence of this article of mine is this much : Because of the reason that **Avyākṛita Nāmarūpa** is the seed (cause) for the world of duality - if any one calls it '**Mūlāvidyā**' - then the opinion of such people is not unacceptable to me. Because of the reason that such **Avyākṛita Nāmarūpa** is the cause for everything it can be called '**Mūla**'. But to say that - "It is not **Adhyasta** (super-imposed) - not **Avidyākālpita** (imagined, misconceived due to ignorance)" - is opposed to **Bhāshyas** as also to **Yukti** ; and hence I can never accept that. Even the **Vivaraṇāchārya**, who has championed the cause of '**Mūlāvidyāvāda**', has at one place accepted that : अनादिमिथ्याज्ञान-संबन्धोप्यात्मन्यज्ञानवत् काल्पनिकत्वादाकाश काष्ण्यवदात्मनः कूटस्थतां न विहन्ति । (**Vivaraṇa**). Meaning : "It has been imagined in **Ātman** just as black colour is imagined in empty space". If the full meaning (import) of this pregnant sentence is discerned by all the critics, I feel that my mission is fulfilled.

OM TAT SAT

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Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore - 560 028

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

His Holiness Paramahansa Sri Sri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji, the founder of Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya and author of over 200 reputed works on Advaita in Kannada, Sanskrit and English, blessed the earth with his presence for ninety-six useful and rich years (1880-1975).

His works are characterized by vast and deep scholarship, clear and precise perception and an attractive and lively style. His authentic interpretation of Śaṅkara has been greatly recognized by both the East and the West. He was not just a rare and accomplished individual but a mighty and magnificent institution.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This booklet - though small in size, has profound, lofty, unalloyed teachings of Ādi Śaṅkara - was the product of relentless and long-drawn research carried out over a period of over 70 years by Sri Sri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji, of hallowed memory.

As a result of a process of decadence and degeneration in the calibre of the preceptors and their teachings in the post-Śaṅkara era, many an alien and doctrinaire tenet, totally opposed to the traditional methodology propounded and propagated by the most ancient line of teachers like Veda Vyāsa, Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara and Sureśwara, have come into vogue even in the highest Vedāntic circles. Here is a sincere and sagacious attempt to cleanse all the accretions or dross that Śaṅkara's Vedānta has gathered over a millenium now and present Śaṅkara Vedānta in its pristine pure glory. It is hoped that this booklet will shake up many scholars and seekers alike from their slumber and stimulate them to go in for great works in Sanskrit like 'Vedānta Prakriyā-Pratyabhijñā', 'Maṇḍūkya Rahasya Vivṛiti' etc. as also English works like 'How to Recognize the Method of Vedānta', 'Intuition of Reality' etc. by the Rev. Swāmiji.